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CHAPTER 1: PROFILE

Introduction

With its mix of deserts, steppes, oasis, river valleys, and mountains, Uzbekistan is at the center of the great trade routes of ancient and modern history: the Royal Road of Noble Bukhara, the Silk Road, and the Golden Road to Samarkand. Soldiers of antiquity, such as Alexander the Great and Cyrus the Persian, as well as the equestrian archers from Mongolia, are part of Uzbek history.^{1,2}



© Gilad Rom
Samarkand skyline, Uzbekistan

Over the past two centuries, Uzbeks have used the Arabic, Cyrillic, and Latin alphabets.³ The Islamic states yielded to Russian rule. Soviet domination dissolved, making way for an independent republic with broad links to the global community.⁴ A question remains whether true post communist political and economic reform will be part of the next chapter in Uzbekistan's history.

Geography

Area

Uzbekistan lies in the middle of Central Asia. It is surrounded by the new republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. With an area of 447,400 sq km (172,742 sq mi), Uzbekistan is roughly the size of California. Most of the country lies between the region's two major rivers, the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya.⁵



© Afilin / Wikimedia.org
Tachkent, Uzbekistan

Climate

Uzbekistan has a continental climate. Large areas of the country are desert-like and have an extended hot, dry summer. The spring is generally mild and rainy in the east. Autumn brings rainfall and, at higher levels, early frosts. The winter season is unpredictable, with freezing temperatures throughout the country and snowfall at higher elevations. Average summer temperatures range from 26°C–32°C (79°–90°F). Figures for desert

¹ Roxana Tour, "Alexander the Great in History of Uzbekistan," 2007, http://www.roxanatur.com/uzbekistan/tour_travel/alexander_great.html

² Sitara Group of Companies, "Briefly Stated History of Uzbekistan," 10 May 2010, <http://sitara.com/Uzbek/history.html>

³ U.S. English Foundation, "Uzbekistan: Language Research," August 2007, <http://www.usefoundation.org/view/886>

⁴ Sitara Group of Companies, "Briefly Stated History of Uzbekistan," 10 May 2010, <http://sitara.com/Uzbek/history.html>

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

regions in the summer are appreciably higher, surpassing 40°C (115°F). Winter averages lie between -6°-2°C (21°-36°F).⁶

Topography

Uzbekistan's terrain ranges from the parched Turan Basin of the far northwest to the central steppes and flat desert plains that account for roughly two-thirds of the country. The foothills and mountains of the southeast are extensions of the Tian Shan and Gissaro-Alay ranges to the east and southeast. They are part of the Pamir Knot, also called the "Roof of the World." The two main rivers, the Syr Darya, which irrigates the Ferghana Valley and the Amu Darya, which irrigates the Khorzesh Oasis, traverse the country and drain into the Aral Sea. Elevations range from near sea level in the Turkmenistan border region of the far west to more than 2,000 m (6,500 ft) in the east. Only about 4.8% of the land is forested, and it is in the Ferghana Valley.⁷

Major Rivers

Amu Darya

From its headwaters in the Hindu Kush, the Amu Darya cuts through the high Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan. It runs 2,540 km (1,578 mi) through the country, separating the Kyzyl Kum (Red Sands) and the Kara Kum (Black Sands). Heavily silted, the Amu Darya finally drains into the Aral Sea.⁸



© AudreyH / flickr.com
Amu Darya River

Syr Darya

The Syr Darya begins in Kyrgyzstan and flows from the Tian Shan Mountains into the Ferghana Valley. Bypassing Tashkent, it runs 2,137 km (1,335 mi) through eastern Uzbekistan and the Kyzyl Kum (Red Sands), and empties into the Aral Sea.⁹

Zarafshan

The Zarafshan is the third-largest river of Uzbekistan. Upstream, where it flows through Tajikistan, the river is known as the Mostchokh Darya. It enters Uzbekistan through the Zarafshan Valley, located in the Samarkand region, and brings water to some of the major oases in the country.¹⁰

⁶ Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Uzbekistan: Climate," 2007, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Uzbekistan-CLIMATE.html>

⁷ Country Studies, U.S. Library of Congress, "Uzbekistan: Geography," 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/uzbekistan/15.htm>

⁸ The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, "Amu Darya," *Encyclopedia.com*, 2008, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-AmuDarya.html>

⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Syr Darya," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/578814/Syr-Darya>

¹⁰ Calum MacLeod and Bradley Mayhew, *Uzbekistan: The Golden Road to Samarkand* (Lincolnwood, IL: Passport Books, 1997).

Major Cities

Tashkent

The capital of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, is Central Asia's foremost city. For 2,000 years Tashkent has been a trade center. Because of damage caused by several earthquakes, the last major one in 1966, and seven decades of socialist architecture, little of the original city remains. The city became a part of the Mongol Empire in the 13th century and the Russian Empire in the 19th. Tashkent's population today is more than 2.2 million.^{11, 12}

Samarkand

Samarkand is situated on an oasis and is home to approximately 366,000 people.¹³ The city is known as the "Crossroads of Cultures." With its distinctive blue-domed monuments, Samarkand was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites in 2001.¹⁴



© Arthur Chapman
Mausoleum in Samarkand

Bukhara

Bukhara is Uzbekistan's best-preserved city and has a population of 241,300.¹⁵ The oldest section of the city has many *madrassas* (Islamic seminaries). Reminders of its royal past include the Ark Fortress. The Kalyan Minaret, Bukhara's most famous landmark, was once the tallest structure in Central Asia. It was spared destruction when Timur, the 14th-century Mongol emperor, torched the city.¹⁶

Shakhrisabz

Nearly 75,000 people live in Shakhrisabz.¹⁷ The city lies south of Samarkand and seems totally untouched by Russian rule. Timur was born in Shakhrisabz. Originally known as Kesh, the current name means "green city."¹⁸

¹¹ BBC News, "Timeline: Uzbekistan," 29 August 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1295881.stm

¹² Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan," in *The World Factbook*, 25 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹³ Mongabay, "2005 Population Estimates for Cities in Uzbekistan," 2000–2007, http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/2005_world_city_populations/Uzbekistan.html

¹⁴ BBC News (International Version), "Silk Road City Marks 2,750 Years," 26 August 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6965037.stm>

¹⁵ Thomas Brinkhoff: City Population, "Uzbekistan," 31 July 2010, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Uzbekistan.html>

¹⁶ Mongabay, "2005 Population Estimates for Cities in Uzbekistan," 2000–2007, http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/2005_world_city_populations/Uzbekistan.html

¹⁷ TravelGuideAdvice, "Shakhrisabz," n.d., <http://travelguideadvice.com/shakhrisabz-285528.html>

¹⁸ Silkroad Foundation, "Tamerlane (1336–1405)—The Last Great Nomad Power," 2000, <http://www.silk-road.com/artl/timur.shtml>

Media

The media in Uzbekistan has been characterized as not deviating from the official party line.¹⁹ There are six daily newspapers and one weekly journal, *Mohiyat*. Two of the papers have a Russian edition. *Pravda Vostoka* is a national daily, and the others are regional. All are either government-owned or, as in the case of *Ozbekistan Ozovoi*, owned and operated by the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).²⁰



© Chris Schuepp
Female film maker in Uzbekistan

A similar state of affairs exists with broadcast media. There are eight TV networks, which have Central Asian satellite uplinking.²¹ They are operated by prominent PDP members, with direct guidance from the Ministry of Information. Following the 2005 uprising in Andijan, Janon, the official news agency, imposed greater government control on domestic political reporting. The Foreign Ministry has never allowed Western news agencies to operate independently inside the country. An exception to this policy of allowing western news agencies to operate independently inside the country is being discussed. CTC, an independent Russian broadcaster has acquired controlling interest in Kazakhstan's Channel 31 Group for the equivalent of USD 65 million in cash. CTC has also been permitted to register and operate a broadcasting company in Uzbekistan.^{22, 23}

Government

In practice, governance in Uzbekistan emanates from the president's office in the capital of Tashkent down through provincial governments called *hokimiats*. Each of the country's 12 *wiloyatlar*, or provinces, is governed by a *hokim* (state governor) who has been appointed by and can be replaced by the president.²⁴ The *hokim* is expected to be sensitive to the needs of his district, which often translates to his being aware of his district's skills and resources and using them as barter in exchange for



© Sarah Olmstead
Parliament building, Tashkent

¹⁹ Reporters Without Borders for Press Freedom, "State Media Serve President's Reelection Bid, While Independent Journalists Seem Doomed to Disappear," 24 December 2007, <http://en.rsf.org/uzbekistan-state-media-serve-president-s-24-12-2007,24841.html>

²⁰ Joel Simon, "EU Should Press Uzbekistan on News Media Crisis," Committee to Protect Journalists, 19 January 2011, <http://www.cpj.org/2011/01/cpj-asks-eu-to-press-uzbekistan-on-its-press-freed.php>

²¹ BBC News, "Country Profile: Uzbekistan," 24 December 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1238242.stm

²² CTC Media Press Center, "CTC Expands into Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Fast-Growing Markets with a Combined Population of Over 40 Million," 4 September 2007, <http://www.ctcmedia.ru/press-center/releases/?id=122>

²³ Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press—Uzbekistan (2010)," http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/pfs/inc_country_detail.cfm?country=7946&year=2010&pf

²⁴ Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road* (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 2000).

favor with the office of the president. The president also appoints the prime minister and the deputy prime ministers, who in turn oversee the ministries of agriculture, trade, energy, transportation, culture, education, health, and labor. All ministries answer to the president.²⁵ The acceptance of authoritarian leadership was a lesson learned well from the Soviets. The 250-seat legislature, *Oly Majlis*, meets only for a few days each year, and all parties in the legislature support the president and his policies. The democratic language of the Constitution of December 1992 is wholly cosmetic. Any provision can be superseded by executive, presidential decree. Unquestioned central rule is the norm in Uzbekistan.²⁶

The Republic of Karakalpakstan is a sovereign republic under the protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan and has been granted autonomous status. It has its own constitution and its own president. Karakalpak is recognized as the official language of the territory. In reality, Karakalpakstan is simply another province of Uzbekistan. Authority resides in the president of the country. The Council of Ministers does not exercise any independent role and simply rubber-stamps decisions made by the president.²⁷

Economy

Since independence, government leaders have promised to develop a market-based economy. Efforts to move in that direction have been deliberate and cautious. Initial market based measures included partial price liberalization, the unification of foreign-exchange markets, the introduction of new taxes, changes to the import tariffs, and the privatization of small shops.²⁸ Nevertheless, the country's economy retains many elements of the Soviet style of economic planning and control.^{29, 30}



© RTreadway / flickr.com
Children picking cotton

Uzbekistan remains heavily dependent on the agricultural sector as a chief contributor to the gross domestic product. Another critical part of the economy is the mining and mineral industry. In 2005, Uzbekistan had the world's sixth-largest reserves of gold. The country has sufficient natural gas reserves to meet domestic needs, and oil reserves are nearly sufficient to meet internal demand.³¹ By 2009, Uzbekistan's exports of natural gas and petroleum accounted for

²⁵ Imogen Bell, ed., *Eastern Europe, Russian and Central Asia 2003* (London: Europa Publications, 2002).

²⁶ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., "Government," in *Uzbekistan: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/uzbekistan/44.htm>

²⁷ Karakalpak.com, "Government of Karakalpakstan," 3 May 2009, <http://www.karakalpak.com/stangov.html>

²⁸ Mongabay.com, "Uzbekistan: Economy," n.d., http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/ECONOMY.html

²⁹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Uzbekistan: Economy," February 2007, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Uzbekistan.pdf>

³⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

³¹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Uzbekistan," February 2007, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Uzbekistan.pdf>

about 40 % of all foreign exchange earnings and surpassed cotton as the largest source of foreign currency.^{32, 33}

The energy production sector, which rests on certain and verifiable deposits of oil and natural gas, has been slow to develop. Exploitation of oil and gas deposits could liberate Uzbekistan from dependence on energy imports and render the country self-sufficient in energy. Extraction of the substantial mineral deposits, such as gold, uranium, copper, and silver, awaits foreign investment. All future economic development is contingent on economic reform and attracting foreign investment. Moreover, real economic development will remain static until a transparent domestic trade code, consistent with global economic norms, is put in place.³⁴

History

Antiquity

When Alexander the Great invaded Central Asia in 330 B.C.E., he found that the area had already been traversed by Mesopotamians (from modern-day Iraq) and other Indo-Europeans. Western Turks who invaded the area in the 6th century B.C.E. were already settled in the area around Samarkand and Bukhara. As late as the 1st century B.C.E., large numbers of Persian nomads were drifting into present-day Uzbekistan. Along with invaders yet to come, they left their ethnic imprint on modern Uzbeks.³⁵

Islamization

The road to the west was easier for the Muslim Arabs who brought Islam across North Africa than for those who braved the steppes of Central Asia. Arab expeditionary forces under Qutaibah Muslim penetrated the land they called *Mawarannahr* in the early 8th century.³⁶

The river “*Mawarannahr*” refers to was the Amu Darya, known to the Greco-Roman world as the Oxus. Early Arabs found the people of the region to be firm adherents of Buddhism and, in some areas near Persia, Zoroastrianism. It wasn’t until the 10th century that numerous *madrassas* or Islamic seminaries began to spring up, first in the Bukhara area and later in Samarkand and Tashkent.³⁷



Courtesy Wikimeida.org
Painting of Alexander the Great

³² Central Intelligence Agency, “Uzbekistan” in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

³³ Travel Document Systems, “Uzbekistan: Economy,” 2011, <http://www.traveldocs.com/uz/economy.htm>

³⁴ Mongabay.com, “Uzbekistan: Economy.” 2000–2007, http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/ECONOMY.html

³⁵ Global Security, “Military History,” c. 2000–2007, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/uzbek-history.htm>

³⁶ *Mawarannahr* is from the Arabic *ma-wara-an-nahar*, or “that which lies beyond the river.” It is the equivalent of the Latin name *Transoxiana*.

³⁷ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., “Ethnic Composition” in *Uzbekistan: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/uzbekistan/19.htm> <http://countrystudies.us/uzbekistan/2.htm>

Seljuk Turks

Using modern-day Uzbekistan as a stepping stone, Seljuk Turks under Tughril Beg (1037–1063) invaded and conquered Persia in 1051.³⁸ Moving westward, they conquered Baghdad in 1055. Within a century they created the broad empire of Turkestan. This empire lasted until the mid-14th century and stretched from China in the east to the Anatolian Peninsula in the west and north into Russia. Turkic Mongol rule set the stage for later Mongol empire ambitions. Today's Republic of Turkey regards the Seljuk Empire as its predecessor.³⁹

Mongol Empires

By the turn of the 14th century, Chinggis (1165–1227), the orphaned son of a tribal chieftain born in Mongolia's Gobi Desert, was agitating for unity among northern Mongol tribes. Genghis, as Chinggis was later known, emerged as *Khan*, or leader of a tribal confederation. Having augmented his forces with Turkic recruits, he and his archer horsemen embarked on campaigns southward and eastward. Over a span of 25 years Genghis Khan conquered a large part of China, including Beijing, and subdued substantial parts of Central Asia.⁴⁰ After his death, Genghis Khan's empire was divided among his four sons. The area of Uzbekistan fell to his second son, Chagatai.^{41, 42}

The Timurids

Chief among the descendents of Chagatai's Mongol dynasty in Central Asia was Tamerlane ("Timur the Lame") (1336–1405), who was born in a village south of Samarkand.⁴³ In spite of his limp, caused by a riding injury at an early age, Tamerlane personally led his archers on campaigns.

Tamerlane and his archers traveled east to India and China and west as far as Smyrna (Turkey) and north to Moscow. At home, Tamerlane burned and then rebuilt the major cities of his realm, leaving Samarkand the architectural pearl of Central Asia. On the eve of a confrontation with the emperor of Ming China in 1405, Tamerlane died along the banks of the Syr Darya River. His body was embalmed and placed in an ebony coffin to be buried in the Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum in Samarkand.



© RTreadway / flickr.com
Statue of Tamerlane

The Timurid dynasty came to an end in 1506. Tamerlane's great-great-

³⁸ The Seljuk Turks were a Turkic Sunni Muslim dynasty. From the 11th to 14th century, the Seljuks ruled a vast empire that included parts of the Middle East and Central Asia from the 11th to 14th centuries.

³⁹ Yeditepe Universitesi, "Seljuk Turks. Turkish Culture and History," 28 July 2005, http://turkishhistoryandculture.org/index.php/Seljuk_Turks

⁴⁰ Timothy May, "Mongol History: Genghis Khan," Alamo Community College District, 2001, <http://www.alamo.edu/sac/history/keller/mongols/empsub1.html>

⁴¹ MaryLee Knowlton, *Cultures of the World: Uzbekistan* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Publishers, 2006).

⁴² Mongabay.com, "Uzbekistan—History," n.d., http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/HISTORY.html

⁴³ The name "Timur" comes from a Turkic Mongol word meaning "iron."

great grandson, Babur, fled invading Uzbek forces and left Ferghana Valley for India. There he established the Mughal kingdom that created emperors such as Shah Jahan and architectural landmarks such as the Taj Mahal and Shalimar Gardens.⁴⁴

The Uzbeks

The Uzbeks, named after descendents of Öz Beg, the Turkic Mongol, ruled Uzbekistan from 1500–1865. It was a period of decline in trade, because the overland trade route, the Silk Road, was being replaced by faster oriental sea routes discovered by Portuguese and Italian explorers.

Chief among the early Uzbeks was Muhammad Shaybani Khan (1451–1510), the poet king who ruled for ten years and died trying to annex eastern Persia.⁴⁵ Later Uzbek rulers had to contend with invasions from czarist Russia. As early as 1554, Ivan the Terrible invaded Central Asia. Later czars, such as Peter the Great, furthered Russia’s interest in the agricultural lands of the Central Asian steppes.⁴⁶



Courtesy Wikimedia.org
Depiction of Muhammad
Shaybani

The Russians

In 1717 the expeditionary force sent by Peter the Great to Khiva in Central Asia failed. Nearly everyone was killed. Another Russian march on Khiva in the winter of 1839–40 failed as well, ending with significant loss of life. Nevertheless, Russia’s resolve was strengthened. It saw Khiva as key to controlling India’s northern frontier. Britain was consolidating its hold over India in the mid-19th century; Russia was determined to frustrate the British Empire. Thus Central Asia, the corridor to India, regained the strategic importance it had lost when the Silk Road declined.

In 1865, the Russians succeeded in conquering Tashkent. Khiva and Bukhara fell soon thereafter. Uzbekistan became a regional power base. A rail link with Moscow was established, and Uzbek cotton filled the market gap created by the U.S. Civil War. Central Asia was being modernized by an eastern European power.

Over the next 50 years, several waves of Russian colonists made their way to Uzbekistan. Czarist Russia extended its hold over its new protectorate in Central Asia and all of present-day Uzbekistan came under Russian rule. Central Asians ceded control of their affairs to the Russians, but resistance came from the Islamic reform movement known as Jadidism.^{47, 48}

⁴⁴ *New World Encyclopedia*, “Timurid Dynasty,” 2008, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Timurid_Dynasty

⁴⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Uzbekistan: The Early Uzbeks,” 2008, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-73654/Uzbekistan>

⁴⁶ Mongabay.com, “Uzbekistan—History,” n.d., http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/HISTORY.html

⁴⁷ Mongabay.com, “Uzbekistan—History,” n.d., http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/HISTORY.html

⁴⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Uzbekistan: Russian and Soviet Rule,” 2008, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-73655/Uzbekistan>

The Soviet Era

News that the czar had fallen brought regional expectations that an autonomous state could be established. On behalf of the Comintern, Lenin himself appealed to the Muslims, urging them to rebel against Tsar Nikolas.⁴⁹ In mid-1917, a new and independent Muslim khanate was proclaimed in Kokand.⁵⁰ However, in February 1918, a Soviet response came in the form of a brutal assault during which most of the city's 50,000 residents were killed. Muslim popular resistance flickered for several years. In 1924 the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan was founded on territory of the former khanates.⁵¹ By that time Lenin was dead and a new chapter in Soviet history had begun under Josef Vissarionovitch Yukashvili Stalin.



© Arthur Chapman
Soviet-era architecture

The Stalinist era brought tightened Soviet control of Uzbek life and brutal repression. In several purges, all resistance to Moscow's control was decimated. Following the arrest and execution of Chief Commissar Khojayev, the nationalists, and the original Uzbekistan Communist Party members in 1938, the government and party ranks in Uzbekistan were filled with people loyal to the Moscow government. During this period the *kolkhoz*, or farm collectives, came into being, and all private ownership was abolished.⁵²

After Stalin's death in 1953, political repression eased. However, economic exploitation continued as two generations of Uzbek leaders bartered Uzbekistan's cotton for large measures of personal favor with the Central Committee in Moscow. Political dissent was being carefully aired in public forums when Mikhail Gorbachev articulated his doctrine of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.⁵³ When the 1991 coup against Gorbachev by discontented hard-liners in Moscow failed, independence movements throughout the Soviet Union were fueled. In December 1991, Uzbeks voted for independence and chose Islam Karimov, a dedicated communist, as their president.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ The Comintern (from Communist International) was an international Communist organization founded in Moscow in March 1919 to aid in the creation of the Soviet republic.

⁵⁰ A *khanate* is an Islamic entity governed by a khan, or chieftain.

⁵¹ WorldRover.com, "Uzbekistan: History," 1998, http://www.worldrover.com/history/uzbekistan_history.html

⁵² Mongabay.com, "Uzbekistan—History," n.d., http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/HISTORY.html

⁵³ *Glasnost* and *perestroika* are terms used to describe reforms introduced by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid- to late 1980s. The reforms called for freedom of information and economic restructuring.

⁵⁴ Mongabay.com, "Uzbekistan: History," 2000–2007, http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/uzbekistan/HISTORY.html

Independence

The Communist Party of Uzbekistan crumbled, and in its place the People's Democratic Party was born. The National State Security has replaced the KGB. Free and fair elections, promised by the leadership, have not come about. Although press censorship is now unconstitutional, the government dominates the media, and journalists who challenge this control are harassed and arrested.⁵⁵ When Karimov's leadership was challenged by a series of bombs in Tashkent in 1999, the President declared the incident a coup attempt by Islamic radicals.⁵⁶ In an act of reprisal, several hundred Islamic leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Subsequent elections in 2000 and 2002 that reinstated President Karimov have been described by the U.S. State Department as neither free nor fair.⁵⁷ Karimov was reconfirmed by popular election in December 2007. The reported voter turnout was unusually high, at 90.6%.⁵⁸



© Giorgio Minguzzi
Flag of Uzbekistan

Ethnic Groups

Although various ethnic groups live in Uzbekistan, the country remains relatively homogeneous.⁵⁹ When the Soviet Union created the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan in 1924, it included ethnic groups other than the Uzbek majority. The arbitrary drawing of national borders was designed to maintain interethnic stresses and strains, which would keep the groups from presenting a potential threat to Soviet rule.^{60, 61} These pressures have increased since the fall of the Soviet Union.⁶²



© venton.picq.fr / Wikimedia.org
Uzbekistan, Bukhara Festival

⁵⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists, "North Korea Tops CPJ List of '10 Most Censored Countries,'" Special Report 2006," http://www.cpj.org/censored/censored_06.html

⁵⁶ Gregory Gleason, "Why Russia Is in Tajikistan," *Comparative Strategy*, 20: 77–89, 2001, <http://www.unm.edu/~gleasong/mats/ComparativeStrategy.pdf>

⁵⁷ *Encyclopedia of the Nations*, "World leaders 2003: Uzbekistan," 2007, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/World-Leaders-2003/Uzbekistan-LEADERSHIP.html>

⁵⁸ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Republic of Uzbekistan: Presidential Election 23 December 2007," 23 April 2008, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/uzbekistan/31600>

⁵⁹ Countriesquest.com, "The People of Uzbekistan, Ethnic Groups and Languages," n.d., http://www.countriesquest.com/asia/uzbekistan/the_people_of_uzbekistan/ethnic_groups_and_languages.htm

⁶⁰ Edward Stourton, "Kyrgyzstan: Stalin's Deadly Legacy," *The Guardian*, 20 June 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jun/20/kyrgyzstan-stalins-deadly-legacy>

⁶¹ Khurasaan.com, "A History of Islam in Central Asia: Part II," n.d., http://www.islamawareness.net/CentralAsia/ca_hist2.html

⁶² Glenn E. Curtis, ed., "Ethnic Composition," in *Uzbekistan: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/uzbekistan/19.htm>

Uzbeks

The Uzbeks, who account for 80% of the population, are primarily of ethnic Turkish origin, with some Mongolian and Persian ancestry. Their language is related to Turkish. They have long been a “settled” people rather than nomadic.⁶³ Uzbeks follow the Salafi school of Sunni Islam and are among the most devout followers of the religion. The division of labor is such that men work outside the home and women remain responsible for household tasks and activities.^{64, 65, 66, 67}

Kazakhs

Kazakhs are descendants of nomadic livestock herders. They are the fourth-largest ethnic group in Uzbekistan and make up about 3% of the population.^{68, 69} Kazakhs first became a distinct group during the 15th century when they escaped Uzbek control. Most settled in what is today Kazakhstan.⁷⁰ Kazakhs in Uzbekistan live in the northern border region of the country.⁷¹ Their Turkish-derived language is one of the most widely spoken in Central Asia.

Kyrgyz

The Kyrgyz minority has a strong clan identification and inhabits the Ferghana Valley.⁷² The Kyrgyz are Sunni Muslims but are not particularly devout practitioners of their religion. The Kyrgyz were a primarily nomadic people until the 1930s when the Soviets introduced forced collectivization. Today they still live in yurts in their summer pastures. Men herd the flocks in the mountains while women work on valley farms. They live in their winter camps from November to April.⁷³

⁶³ David J. Phillips, *Peoples on the Move: Introducing the Nomads of the World* (Pasadena, CA: Piquant, 2001), <http://books.google.com/books?id=54gyRnhIugkC&pg=PA304#v=onepage&q&f=false>

⁶⁴ Mark Dickens, “The Uzbeks,” 1990, <http://www.oxuscom.com/Uzbeks.pdf>

⁶⁵ MaryLee Knowlton, *Cultures of the World: Uzbekistan* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2006).

⁶⁶ Maps of world.com, “Ethnic Groups in Uzbekistan,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/uzbekistan/people/ethnic-groups.html>

⁶⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Uzbekistan: The People,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/621059/Uzbekistan>

⁶⁸ Maps of world.com, “Ethnic Groups in Uzbekistan,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/uzbekistan/people/ethnic-groups.html>

⁶⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Uzbekistan: People,” in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

⁷⁰ David J. Phillips, *Peoples on the Move: Introducing the Nomads of the World* (Pasadena, CA: Piquant, 2001),

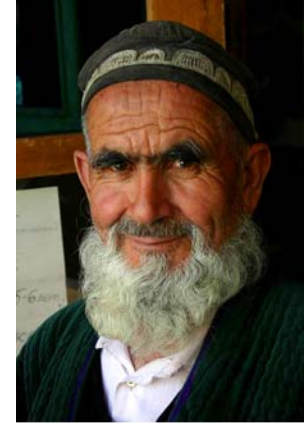
⁷¹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Uzbekistan: People,” in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

⁷² Lydia M. Buyers, ed., *Central Asia in Focus: Political and Economic Issues* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2003),

⁷³ David J. Phillips, *Peoples on the Move: Introducing the Nomads of the World* (Pasadena, CA: Piquant, 2001),

Tajik

The Tajiks are an Indo-European people who speak Persian.⁷⁴ They make up 5% of the population of Uzbekistan.⁷⁵ However, many experts consider this figure an underestimation.⁷⁶ A large number of Tajiks live in the cities of Bukhara and Samarqand, where the Tajik language is widely spoken.⁷⁷ Tajikistan was engulfed in civil war after independence in 1991, which made return to their ancestral homeland unlikely for many Tajiks. Islam Karimov, president of Uzbekistan, is of Tajik descent. He is reputed to speak better Russian and Tajik than he does Uzbek.⁷⁸



© Steve Evans
Tajikistan Man

Karakalpaks

Karakalpaks live mainly in Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic. The Karakalpaks were originally agro pastoralists living in clans. Today, they make their living primarily by growing crops near the delta of the Amu Darya River. They are followers of the Sunni Hanafi sect of Islam.^{79, 80}

⁷⁴ Maps of world.com, "Ethnic Groups in Uzbekistan," 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/uzbekistan/people/ethnic-groups.html>

⁷⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan: People," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

⁷⁶ MaryLee Knowlton, *Cultures of the World: Uzbekistan* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2006).

⁷⁷ Topasia.kg, "Uzbekistan," n.d., <http://www.topasia.kg/en/uzbekistan/passport-and-geography>

⁷⁸ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., "Ethnic Composition," in *Uzbekistan: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/uzbekistan/19.htm>

⁷⁹ David J. Phillips, *Peoples on the Move: Introducing the Nomads of the World*, (Pasadena, CA: Piquant, 2001),

⁸⁰ MaryLee Knowlton, *Cultures of the World: Uzbekistan* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2006).

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Steppes and flat desert plains account for roughly two-thirds of Uzbekistan's topography.
True

Uzbekistan's terrain ranges from the Turan Basin of the northwest, to the central steppes and flat desert plains that make up about two-thirds of the country.

2. All Uzbek ministries answer to the president.
True

The president appoints the prime minister and the deputy prime ministers, who in turn oversee the ministries of agriculture, trade, energy, transportation, culture, education, health, and labor. All ministries answer to the president.

3. The period of Uzbek rule from 1500–1865 was marked by a decline in trade.
True

The period of Uzbek rule from 1500–1865 was a period of decline in trade because the overland trade route, the Silk Road, was being replaced by faster oriental sea routes discovered by European explorers.

4. Private ownership was abolished during Russian rule.
False

All private ownership was abolished during Soviet Rule.

5. The national borders of Uzbekistan were drawn to include many different ethnic groups.
True

When Stalin drew the lines defining the national borders, he intentionally created borders that would maintain interethnic stresses and strains. He hoped the tensions between the groups would keep them from presenting a threat to Soviet rule.

CHAPTER 2: RELIGION

Overview of Major Religions

About 88% of the population of Uzbekistan is Muslim and part of either the moderate Sunni Hanifi sect or the separatist, mystical Sufi sect called *naqshbandi*.⁸¹ About 25% of all Muslims in Uzbekistan are Sufi adherents. The Sufi tradition began in Iraq and Syria during the 9th century. Sufism is rejected by Sunni and Shi'a Islam.⁸² The non-Muslim minority includes mostly Russian Orthodox believers who trace their religious history back to czarist Russia's 19th-century occupation of the Central Asian republics. About 20,000 people, less than one-tenth of one percent of the population, are adherents of Judaism. Only two cities, Tashkent and Samarkand, have congregations with permanent rabbis.⁸³ The remainder of the population is identified as belonging to Christian denominations, such as Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Korean Protestants, and Seventh-day Adventists.^{84, 85}



© BePhoto / Wikimedia.org
Naqshbandi spiritual order

Islam

Toward the end of the 7th century, Islam spread rapidly westward across Africa and eastward across central and south Asia. Following 8th-century conquests of Central Asia by Arab armies, *Mawarannahar*,⁸⁶ as present-day Uzbekistan was then known, became an Islamic province. By the 10th century Islam had replaced Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity as the principal religion. Islam teaches monotheism as it was revealed to the prophet Muhammad in the Qur'an. Muslims, followers of Islam, are required to observe the five pillars



© Basil D. Soufi
Holy city of Mecca (Hajj)

⁸¹ Founded by Abu Hanifa in the second century of Islam, this is the most liberal of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

⁸² Igor Rotar, "Uzbekistan: Sufism Used for Uzbek Propaganda in the USA," Forum 18, Oslo, Norway, 13 May 2004, http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=319

⁸³ The Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS, "Uzbekistan," 2007, <http://www.fjc.ru/communities/communities.asp?aid=80073>

⁸⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan: People," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

⁸⁵ Mongabay, "Country Profile: Uzbekistan," February 2007, http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_profiles/2004-2005/Uzbekistan.html

⁸⁶ This name comes from the Arabic "*ma-wara-an-nahar*" or "that which lies beyond the river," i.e., land beyond the Oxus river. Its Latin equivalent was the geographic region known as Transoxania.

⁷ IslamiCity.com, "The Five Pillars of Islam," 2011, <http://www.islamicity.com/mosque/pillars.shtml>

of faith.⁸⁷ The pillars include praying five times a day (*salat*); fasting during the month of Ramadan (*saum*); making a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca (*hajj*); giving charity and alms to the poor (*zakat*); and declaring the central principle of the faith (*shahada*). The latter means repeating that there is but one God and Muhammad is his prophet. In the decades following the death of Muhammad, two sects of Islam emerged and have persisted: Sunni and Shi'a Islam.

Most Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims. Muslims who follow this main form of Islam believe that there were four rightly guided Caliphs who followed in succession after the death of Muhammad. After the death of the fourth Caliph, leaders of the faith embraced the Qur'an and the sayings and teachings of Muhammad, called the *sunna*. For Sunni Muslims, leadership of the faithful cannot be inherited. Islamic jurisprudence, or law, rests in four somewhat different schools or sects of Sunni Islam, each based on the collected writings of the four main scholars of early Sunni Islam: Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Malik, Abu Hanifa, and Shafi'i. The *madrassas*, Islamic seminaries, of Uzbekistan have traditionally followed the most liberal of the four sects, that of Abu Hanifa.⁸⁸

Religion and the Government

Uzbekistan is a secular state and, theoretically, the constitution guarantees freedom of religion. However, Uzbekistan has been identified as one of the world's most serious violators of religious freedom.⁸⁹ All religious groups must register in order to practice their religion, but only groups that do not threaten or criticize the government get permission.⁹⁰ Members of unregistered groups cannot practice their religious beliefs legally and have been subject to persecution and prosecution.^{91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96}



© Euyasik / Wikimedia.org
Poi Kalon Complex, Bukhara

⁸⁸ T. Soon, "A Brief History of Islam," in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Press, 2004), 203–204.

⁸⁹ CNN, "Nations with Worst Religious Tolerance Named," 1 May 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/05/01/religious.freedom/index.html?iref=mpstoryview>

⁹⁰ Jonathan Fox, *A World Survey of Religion and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 149–153

⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, "Uzbekistan: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148810.htm>

⁹² Mushfig Bayram, "Uzbekistan: Crackdown on Devout Muslims Continues," 27 January 2010, Forum 18, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b604d431e.html>

⁹³ Pavol Stracansky (Bishkek), "Central Asian Regimes Fear Unrest," *Global Issues*, 27 February 2011, <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2011/02/27/8682>

⁹⁴ Bob Allen, "Uzbekistan Cracks Down on Unregistered Baptists," *Baptist Standard*, 9 August 2010, http://www.baptiststandard.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11496&Itemid=53

⁹⁵ Felix Corley, "Uzbekistan: Raids, Fines, More Raids, More Fines," Forum 18, 23 April 2010, http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=1435

⁹⁶ Jonathan Fox, *A World Survey of Religion and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 149–153,

Prior to 1917, there were more than 20,000 mosques in Central Asia, most of which were in Uzbekistan. Under Stalin, the number dropped to 65.⁹⁷ Since the fall of the Soviet Union the number of registered mosques has risen to more than 1,800. Following the 1999 terrorist bombings outside government buildings in Tashkent, the government's fear of radical Islam was used as a justification for strengthening repressive measures against perceived religious challenges to the authority of the state.⁹⁸ Most Muslims in the country are moderate and reject the goals and ideology of the more extremist Islamic groups. However, moderate Muslims are sympathetic to Islamic extremist claims of official corruption and injustice. Politicization of Islam is likely to come as a result of opposition to the current government, rather than from a grassroots reawakening of Islamic fervor.⁹⁹

Religion and Daily Life

The mosque or prayer room of the local *mahalla*¹⁰⁰ is the center of Uzbek Islamic life.

Prayer is mandatory for every devout Muslim. Both men and women may go to the mosque to pray, but prayer rooms are segregated into male and female sections. *Mullahs* or religious leaders, who conduct prayer services, are exclusively male. Many people pray at home, on prayer rugs. Islamic traditions that have survived 70 years of Soviet domination, such as adhering to the five pillars of Islam, are observed with quiet rigor by many, but not all, Uzbeks.



© Courtesy Wikimedia.org
Cathedral, Tashkent

Because of uprisings throughout the Middle East, the government tightened its controls on religion. There are pressures on employees not to perform daily prayers during working hours. It has also been reported that women have been instructed not to wear head scarves, known as *hijab*.¹⁰¹

Male-female interaction in everyday life is less controversial than in fundamentalist countries, but certain rules apply. For example, unmarried couples do not spend time alone, and there is no dating in the Western sense. Unmarried women do not go out in public without being chaperoned by their families.

Although the majority of the population is Islamic, tolerance of minorities in Uzbekistan is widespread. Non-Muslims have their own places of worship. However, discussing religion or

⁹⁷ J. K. Mohanty, "Growth of Fundamentalism and Radical Groups in Central Asia," in *Terrorism and Militancy in Central Asia* (New Delhi: Gyan Books, 2006), 122.

¹⁸ Odil Ruzaliev, "Islam in Uzbekistan: Implications of 9/11 and Policy Recommendations for the United States," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 25, no. 1 (April 2005): 13–29, http://ipac.kacst.edu.sa/eDoc/2006/157740_1.pdf

⁹⁹ The American Foreign Policy Council, "Uzbekistan: Overview," *Almanac of Islamism*, 4 April 2011, <http://almanac.afpc.org/Uzbekistan#>

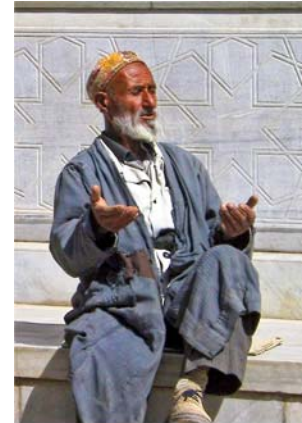
¹⁰⁰ *Mahalla* (alternative *malhalla* and *malhallah*) comes from the Arabic word meaning "place" or "neighborhood." It is a traditional Islamic communal structure as a unit of local political organization.

¹⁰¹ EurAsianet, "Uzbeks Shut Religious Bookstores," 30 March 2011, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63189>

religious topics outside of small religious gatherings is not completely acceptable and is likely to come to the attention of leaders of the *mahalla*. In secular society, people of different faiths interact with each other largely without restrictions, but communal life continues to be structured around the ethical standards of Islamic life.¹⁰²

Religious Holidays

The fasting month of Ramadan ends with *Ruza Hayit*, the festival marking its close. The feast of sacrifice, *Kurban Hayit*, also called *Kurban Bairam*, coincides with the Hajj celebrations and comes approximately 70 days after the month of Ramadan. Uzbeks consider this feast the holiest day in the Islamic year and celebrate it with vigor.¹⁰³

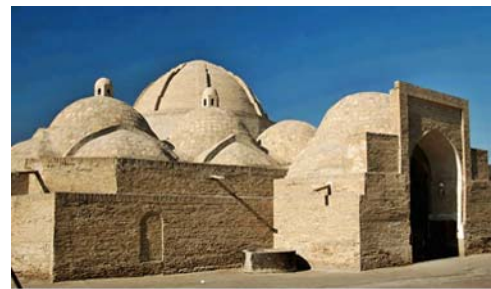


© Jackson Carson
Prayer

Foreigners visiting Uzbekistan during the month of Ramadan should be aware that, for Muslims, Ramadan is a period of intense introspection and meditation. During this month, Muslims cannot eat, drink or smoke between sunrise and sunset. Only the very young, the elderly, and the infirm are exempt from the fast. If Ramadan occurs during the summer, these injunctions are particularly trying. Many restaurants and hotels are open during this period and serve meals to visitors. However, in public one should not eat, drink, or smoke in the presence of Muslims during Ramadan.¹⁰⁴ One should also keep in mind that fasting may cause people to be more irritable and tired than usual.

Places of Worship

Every district or city in Uzbekistan has at least one mosque. The mosques and *madrassas* in the principal cities of Uzbekistan are considered some of the best examples of classical Islamic architecture in Central Asia. Among these are the majestic monuments of Samarkand's Registan Square and the azure mosaics of the nearby Bibi-Khanoum Mosque; famous because it is also a mausoleum for Tamerlane's Chinese wife, Saray Mulk Khanum.^{105, 106} Equally impressive perhaps is the Kalon Mosque complex with its adjacent towering Kalon



© LE FOTO DI MAXI / flickr.com
Bukhara

¹⁰² U.S. Department of State, "Uzbekistan: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148810.htm>

¹⁰³ Gulnoza Saidazimova, "Central Asia: Pilgrims Depart for Hajj Amid State Control, Financial Burdens," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 4 January 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1064406.html>

¹⁰⁴ ReligionFacts, "Ramadan," 1 January 2005, <http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/holidays/ramadan.htm>

¹⁰⁵ OrexCA.com, "Registan: Historical and Architectural monuments of Samarkand," 2011, http://www.orexca.com/monuments_samarkand_registan_square.shtml

¹⁰⁶ SamBuh, "Bibi Khanum Mosque," n.d., <http://www.sambuh.com/en/uzbekistan/cities/samarkand/bibi-khanum-mosque.html>

Minaret, built in the 12th century.^{107, 108} Another impressive monument is the Mir-i-Arab *madrassa*.¹⁰⁹ The czarist Russian conquerors left their mark on Uzbekistan’s landscape with Orthodox Christian churches and the cathedral in Tashkent.^{110, 111}

Mosque Etiquette

Regulations regarding entry of non-Muslims into mosques and *madrassas* differ from one *mahalla* to another. Government-sponsored tours of historical monuments usually include visits to places of worship. These tours are cleared with local Islamic authorities in advance.



© dalbera / flickr.com
Listing of times for prayer

Exchange 1: May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	machitga kirishim mumkinma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

For those wanting to visit one or more of the famous monuments, it is best to find out from local authorities whether and when visits are permitted. If visiting is allowed, it will be for periods outside regular prayer periods.

Exchange 2: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	Qachon namoz ohQiyisiz?
Local:	We pray at noon.	biz tushlik vaQtida namoz ohQiyimiz

¹⁰⁷ *Kalon* means “great” in the Tajik language.

¹⁰⁸ Sacred Destinations, “Kalan Mosque and Minaret, Bukhara,” n.d., <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/uzbekistan/bukhara-kalon-minaret.htm>

¹⁰⁹ East Site Inc., “Mir-i-Arab Madrasah, Bukhara,” 2010, <http://www.east-site.com/miri-arab-madrassah-bukhara>

¹¹⁰ Sairam Tourism Co., “Four Great Religions on the Uzbek Land,” 2011, http://www.sairamtourism.com/tourist_gems_uzb/great-religions

¹¹¹ Erwin.bernhardt.net.nz, “Tashkent—Catholic Cathedral,” 22 January 2005, <http://erwin.bernhardt.net.nz/asia/uzbekistantashkentcatholiccathedral.html>

Several points of etiquette must be observed by visitors to mosques. Visitors should be dressed modestly, with clean, pressed trousers and long-sleeve shirts. In some districts, women may be denied entry completely. If admitted, they must also dress modestly in long skirts and blouses, with no skin showing, and wear head scarves.^{112, 113}



© Math920 / Wikimedia.org
Tajiks in national dress

Exchange 3: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	boshimga biror narsa kiyishim kerakma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Smoking, eating, loud talking, and photography inside mosques are not permitted. Avoid touching any of the artifacts in the mosque or walking in front of people who might be praying. Doing so invalidates their prayers. Visitors must remove their shoes in the vestibule outside the mosque.¹¹⁴

Exchange 4: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	poyavzalimni machit ichkarisida yechishim kerakma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

¹¹² Hounslow Jamia Masjid & Islamic Centre, “Etiquettes of Visiting a Mosque,” 2009, <http://www.hounslowmasjid.co.uk/page2/page10/page30/page30.html>

¹¹³ Ferghana News, “Uzbekistan: Women in Bukhara Are Prohibited to Go to Mosques,” 17 August 2009, <http://enews.ferghananews.com/news.php?id=1324&mode=snews>

¹¹⁴ Istanbul Trails, “Mosque Rules and Etiquette,” n.d., <http://www.istanbultrails.com/2008/06/mosque-rules-and-etiquette/>

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Over three-quarters of the Uzbek population is Muslim.

True

About 88% of Uzbekistan's population (25 million people) is Muslim.

2. Muslims are required to observe the seven pillars of faith.

False

Muslims are required to observe the five pillars of faith. The pillars include praying five times a day; fasting during the month of Ramada; making a pilgrimage to Mecca; giving alms; and declaring the central principle of the faith.

3. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the number of mosques in Uzbekistan has risen sharply.

True

Prior to 1917, there were more than 20,000 mosques in Central Asia, most of which were in Uzbekistan. Under Stalin, the number dropped to 65. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the number of registered mosques has risen to more than 1,800.

4. Complete freedom of religion exists in Uzbekistan.

False

The government requires all religious clerics and places of worship to register, and permits only religious groups that do not challenge the government.

5. Females may not enter the mosques in Uzbekistan.

False

Women may enter mosques but must pray in an area separate from the men.

CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONS

Introduction

The Uzbeks are primarily of European and Mongolian descent. Their traditional lifestyle has been strongly connected to farming, horticulture, crafts, trade, and raising animals. Uzbeks regard themselves as *Sarts*, the settled people, rather than nomadic, like many of their neighbors from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan.¹¹⁵ Approximately 130 different nationalities live in the Republic.¹¹⁶



© Laura e Fulvio / flickr.com
Uzbek men

Traditional Economy

With about 44% of the nation engaged in agriculture, farming activity (for example, cotton cultivation) contributed about 21 % to the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010. In the same year, mining and industry (gold, tungsten, fossil fuels, and textile processing) contributed about another 32 %, and the services sector is around 46 % of the GDP.¹¹⁷



© Arthur Chapman
Cotton plant

The Soviets relied on the country for natural gas and gold. Under the Soviets, Uzbekistan was the largest producer of natural gas and the second-largest provider of gold.¹¹⁸ Uzbekistan is also famous for its weaving craftsmanship, which has produced intricate wool and silk carpets as well as textiles since the days of the Silk Road.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Thomas R. McCray, *Modern World Nations: Uzbekistan* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004).

¹¹⁶ Calum MacLeod and Bradley Mayhew, *Uzbekistan: The Golden Road to Samarkand* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2004).

¹¹⁷ [Central](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html) Intelligence Agency, “Uzbekistan: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹¹⁸ Resul Yalcin, “Economic Transformation,” in *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan: Politics, Economy and Society in the Post-Soviet Era* (Reading, UK: Garnet & Ithaca Press, 2002), 179.

¹¹⁹ Aba Sayyoh Travel Agency, “Folk Art of Uzbekistan: Carpet Making,” 2010, http://www.abasayyoh.com/country/folk_art.html

Greetings and Interactions

Interactions between the people of Uzbekistan are characterized by polite gestures and ritualized greetings. A polite greeting will usually bring a sincere response and open the door to friendly exchanges. The same greeting may be used any time of day: morning, noon, or evening.



© Isaac Alvarez Brugada
Elders, Samarkand

Exchange 5: Good morning.

Soldier:	Good morning.	as salomu alaykum
Local:	Good morning.	walaykim as salom

When making a social call or entering a room where several men are gathered, shaking hands is customary.¹²⁰ Handshaking usually begins with the person on the right and proceeds to one's left. Particular attention should be paid when greeting the *aqsaqals*, or venerated elders. They are the traditional leaders and should be greeted first and cordially.

Exchange 6: Good night!

Soldier:	Good night!	yaKhshi yiotib turing!
Local:	Good night!	yaKhshi yiotib turing!

The left hand should not be used when shaking hands. Occasionally, a stranger may offer his wrist in place of his hand, which is a sign that his hands are not clean. It is inappropriate for a man to shake hands with a woman.¹²¹ Women do not shake hands among themselves, but they do touch each other's shoulders with their right hands.¹²² Central Asians prefer to greet at a closer proximity than Americans and Europeans might be used to.^{123, 124}

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	yaKhshimisiz?
Local:	Fine, very well.	yaKhshi, raHmat

¹²⁰ Fantastic Asia, "Uzbekistan: Customs; Rituals and Ceremonies," 2011, <http://www.fantasticasia.net/?p=37&travel=Customs%20of%20Uzbekistan>

¹²¹ Fantastic Asia, "Uzbekistan: Customs; Rituals and Ceremonies," 2011, <http://www.fantasticasia.net/?p=37&travel=Customs%20of%20Uzbekistan>

¹²² Bradley Mayhew, *Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007).

¹²³ Erin Richards, "Are You the Ugly American?" Budget Travel, October 2006, <http://www.budgettravel.com/bt-dyn/content/article/2006/09/07/AR2006090701067.html>

¹²⁴ Fantastic Asia, "Rituals and Ceremonies," 2011, <http://www.fantasticasia.net/?p=37&travel=Customs%20of%20Uzbekistan>

The Western habit of prolonged eye contact is likely to make Uzbek men and women uncomfortable. Fixed eye contact is offensive and can send the wrong message.¹²⁵ Women rarely look into the eyes of males outside their own family.

Exchange 8: Hi, Mr. Salimov.

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Salimov.	salom janob salimof
Local:	Hello!	salom!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	yaKhshi yuribsizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Individuality is a Western trait. In Uzbek society, an individual is the visible member of a large invisible family. Asking about parents or children is a greatly appreciated gesture.¹²⁶

Exchange 9: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	oylangiz yaKhshima?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	yaKhshi, raHmat

Dress

Most modern Uzbeks living in the cities wear European-style clothes.¹²⁷ Dressing appropriately in the “Sunny Republic,” as Uzbekistan has traditionally been called, is a matter of considering comfort and cultural sensitivity. With 300 days of sunshine per year and roughly two months of chilly winter, light cotton garments are best for the prolonged summer. However, warm boots, woolen layers, and insulated jackets are advised for colder weather or visits to mountainous regions.



© Allan Grey
Traditional dress

Exchange 10: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	mana buni kiysam bohladima?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

¹²⁵ Culture Crossing, “Uzbekistan: Eye Contact,” n.d., http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=10&CID=219

¹²⁶ Culture Crossing, “Uzbekistan: Communication Style,” n.d., http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=8&CID=219

¹²⁷ Uzintour, “Uzbeks,” 2011, http://www.uzintour.com/en/about_uzbekistan/uzbeks/

At all times of the year, trousers and long-sleeved shirts for men and long skirts and long-sleeved blouses for women are advised. Muslim sensibilities must be respected. Revealing or tight fitting clothing should not be worn.^{128, 129}

Exchange 11: How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	Qanday kiyinishim kerak?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	tanangizni ohraidigan keng kiyim kiying

Traditional dress can still be seen in the provinces and smaller villages. Women wear dresses made of Uzbek fabrics such as *atlas*, *khonAtlas*, or *shoyi*. Men wear a *chapan* (robe) and *dopy* (skullcap), both embroidered. At national ceremonies, it is common to see celebrities or artists dressed in traditional clothing.¹³⁰

The government has been making efforts to encourage women to wear more traditional attire. However, *hijab*, or head scarves, are not permitted, because wearing them may indicate Islamic extremism.¹³¹

Social Events

Weddings

Because 88% of the population in Uzbekistan is Sunni Muslim, most social events and rites of passage are observed with a combination of traditions related to folklore and religion. Historically, weddings have represented a union between families, tribes, and clans. October, November, and December are the most popular months for weddings.¹³² Celebrations called *tui* are carried out to the accompaniment of festive music. The couple is first legally married at a registration office. A huge party is then held at the bride’s house. Weddings



© Javier Martin Espartosa
Wedding

¹²⁸ BookRags, “Clothing, Traditional—Uzbekistan,” 2006, <http://www.bookrags.com/research/clothing-traditionaluzbekistan-ema-02/>

¹²⁹ Fatemeh Fakhraie, “What Not to Wear: Uzbek Muslim Leaders Don’t Want Women to Wear Arab-Imported Hijab” 25 February 2009, http://www.religiondispatches.org/dispatches/politics/1158/what_not_to_wear%3A_uzbek_muslim_leaders_don%27t_want_women_to_wear_arab-imported_hijab

¹³⁰ Uzintour, “Uzbeks,” 2011, http://www.uzintour.com/en/about_uzbekistan/uzbeks/

¹³¹ Igor Rotar, “Uzbekistan: Is Head Scarf Ban ‘Enlightened’ Islam?” Forum 18, 30 August 2004, <http://www.paklinks.com/gs/world-affairs/159363-head-scarf-banned-in-uzbekistan.html>

¹³² Greater Kashmir, “Uzbekistan: It Reminds of Kashmir.” 13 February 2011, <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Feb/13/uzbekistan-it-reminds-of-kashmir-28.asp>

usually end with prayers and songs.¹³³ Wedding feasts of wealthy families can go on for as long as a week, with separate receptions held for the bride and groom.

Exchange 12: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	nikoH tohyingiz bilan tabriklayman!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	tashrif buyirganiz uchun faKhrlanamiz

Visitors to these celebrations are always welcome. There is much singing, dancing and food.¹³⁴ At all such occasions, men and women are segregated.¹³⁵ The Islamic aspect of these events seldom stops the presence of alcohol. Vodka, a Russian legacy, and *champanski*, or sparkling wine, flow freely.

Exchange 13: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	ikalangizga baKht tilayman
Local:	We are honored.	ihtirom ila tashakur

Funerals

Funerals are usually carried out, as prescribed by Islam, within 24 hours of death, if possible.¹³⁶

After the body is washed and then wrapped in a shroud, a procession of men makes its way with the body through the streets of the *mahalla*, or neighborhood, to the cemetery.



© whl.travel / flickr.com
Uzbek man

Exchange 14: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	siz va oylangizga taaziya bildiraman
Local:	Thank you.	raHmat

¹³³ Maps of World “Uzbekistan Wedding,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/uzbekistan/society-and-culture/wedding.html>

¹³⁴ *Plov* (also spelled as *pilov* and *pilau*) is the rice dish known in the West as “pilaf.”

¹³⁵ Elise Laker, “Love and Plov in Arslanbob,” *The Spectator*, February 2011, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/49053624/Issue-15>

¹³⁶ About.com, “Islamic Funeral Rites,” 2011, <http://islam.about.com/cs/elderly/a/funerals.htm>

Young men usually wear red and elders wear white during the funeral procession. Women do not attend the graveside prayers. The customary period of mourning is 40 days.

Exchange 15: Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	bardam bohling
Local:	We will try.	Harakat Qilamiz

Hospitality

Hospitality and generosity are highly prized values in Uzbek culture.¹³⁷ After many years of isolation and estrangement from their own culture, Uzbeks seize any opportunity to welcome visitors and new friends. Guests presence is considered an honor..Before entering a house, shoes should be removed at the threshold and polite greetings given.¹³⁸



© Arthur Chapman
Man making bread

Invitations to stay for a meal are almost always offered and should not be dismissed lightly. Even the most modest of households will make great sacrifices for the sake of hospitality, captured by the Uzbek proverb “Treat your guest better than your father.”¹³⁹

Exchange 16: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	meHmondorchiligingiz uchun kata raKhmat
Local:	It is nothing.	ovarasi yohQ

When offered either tea (*choy*) or bread (*nan*), always accept. It is considered rude to decline. The response “oling” (just one helping) is a face-saving way to avoid refusals.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

¹³⁸ Roxana Tour, “Uzbek Customs and Traditions,” 2007, http://www.roxanatur.com/uzbekistan/tour_travel/uzbek_customs.html

¹³⁹ Bradley Mayhew, *Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007),

¹⁴⁰ Jessica Teicher, “Uzbekistan Notebook: The Experiences of a Peace Corps Volunteer,” World Volunteer Web, 30 August 2005, <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/browse/sectors/human-rights/doc/uzbekistan-notebook-the-experiences.html>

Food and Eating Habits

Typical Foods

Uzbek cuisine is not particularly spicy, but it is very flavorful. Black cumin, red and black peppers, barberries, coriander, and sesame seeds are commonly used in cooking. Other herbs used include cilantro, dill, parsley, celeriac, and basil.



© sly06 / flickr.com
Fruit vendor

Uzbek meals vary according to the season. In winter the diet consists mostly of dried fruit and vegetables. Noodle or other pasta dishes are commonplace. In the summer, fruits, nuts, and vegetables are typical. In addition to the more familiar vegetables, green radishes, yellow carrots, and many varieties of squash and pumpkin are eaten.

Muslims are prohibited from eating pork. Mutton is the main source of protein. Beef and horse meat are also eaten. Camel and goat meat are considerably less common.

The Uzbek diet includes dairy products such as *katyk* (a yogurt made from sour milk) and *suzma* (similar to cottage cheese). Both are eaten in salads or added to soups and other main dishes for flavor.¹⁴¹

Eating is typically a family affair. It is common for businesses to close between 1 and 3 p.m. to allow people to go home for their main meal. Most Uzbek homes do not have Western-style tables. Instead, people sit on mats and lean against pillows.¹⁴² Cold drinks or ice cubes are not common.

During a visit to a public visitors are likely to encounter one a versions of the national dish, *plov*. The dish is made mostly with fried or boiled meat, onions, carrots, and rice. Raisins, barberries, chickpeas, or fruit may be added. The rice and spices used in *plov* differ from one geographic region to the next.

Exchange 17: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	bu taom juda yaKhshi ekan
Local:	It’s palov.	bu palou

¹⁴¹ OrexCA.com, “Cuisine of Uzbekistan,” 2011, <http://www.orexca.com/cuisine.shtml>

¹⁴² Culture Gram World Edition, “Republic of Uzbekistan,” 2011, http://wf2dnvr2.webfeat.org/KrcHQ113375/url=http://online.culturegrams.com/secure/pdf/world_pdf.php?id=171

To further compliment the guest, one can inquire about the ingredients or preparation methods for a particular dish.



© Michael Wifall
Plov, Uzbek signature dish

Exchange 18: What ingredients are used to make plov?

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make plov?	palou Qandai masaliQlardan tayyorlanada?
Local:	Meat, onion, carrot, rice and spices.	gohsht, pioz, sabzi, gurich va ziravorlar

Eating Habits

Good Muslim manners in Uzbekistan dictate that both host and guest wash their hands before and after a meal. When seated, everyone traditionally waits for the oldest male to begin eating. Men and women dine separately. Because the left hand is associated with bathroom hygiene and considered unclean, food is always eaten with the right hand.

Exchange 19: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	bu taomning nomi nima?
Local:	This is somsa.	bu somsa

Nonreligious Holidays

The first of the secular holidays in Uzbekistan is that of New Year, 1 January. It is followed by Women’s Day on 8 March, a new but quaint celebration during which men greet women with the first flowers of spring. The most cherished holiday, *Navroz* or “New Day,” falls on 21 March. It has been called the Central Asian New Year and is Persian in origin. Coinciding with the coming of spring and the solstice, Navroz is celebrated with public singing, dancing, horse racing, public circuses, and poetry recitations. Newcomers to Uzbekistan might be



© Michael Wifall
Uzbek dancers

surprised at the public enthusiasm for the polo-like holiday sport of *baiga*, which is played with the decapitated corpse of a goat.^{143, 144}

Exchange 20: Will you be celebrating Navroz?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Navroz.	navrohzni nishonlaysizma
Local:	Yes!	Ha!

On May 9, the Uzbeks observed a Soviet-era holiday, the Day of Memory and Respect (Memorial Day), which commemorates the sacrifices of the veterans and martyrs of the “Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945” (World War II). Independence Day, the birth of Uzbekistan as a republic independent of the former Soviet Union, is celebrated on 1 September. Educator’s Day comes in the autumn on 1 October. It is followed by Constitution Day, the last holiday of the year, on 8 December.

Dos and Don’ts

Do remove your shoes when entering a house or visiting a holy site.

Do bring a small nonalcoholic house gift if invited to an Uzbek house for dinner.

Do dress modestly, covering arms and legs, when entering a holy site.

Do use the whole hand and arm when beckoning to an Uzbek.

Don’t walk in front of Muslims when they are praying. Doing so invalidates their prayers.

Don’t use the left hand when passing something to a Muslim. The left hand is considered unclean.

Don’t point a finger at an Uzbek. Pointing with the finger is demeaning.

Don’t beckon an Uzbek by curling your index finger. This gesture is considered insulting; only animals are called in this manner.

Don’t bring search dogs into a mosque or holy place. Muslims consider dogs unclean animals; their presence makes prayer invalid.

¹⁴³ Q++ Studio, “Bank and Public Holidays for Uzbekistan,” 2011, <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2011/uzbekistan.htm>

¹⁴⁴ Calum MacLeod and Bradley Mayhew, “Festivals and Holidays,” in *Uzbekistan: The Golden Road to Samarkand*, (New York: W. W. Norton), 70.

Chapter 3 Assessment

1. It is appropriate for a man to shake hands with a woman.

False

It is inappropriate for a man to shake hands with a woman. Women do not shake hands among themselves, but they do touch each other's shoulders with their right hands.

2. Fixed eye contact is considered offensive.

True

The Western habit of prolonged eye contact is likely to make Uzbek men and women uneasy. Fixed eye contact is offensive and can send the wrong message. Women rarely look into the eyes of males outside their own family.

3. Food, such as *plov*, is eaten with the right hand.

True

Food is always eaten using the right hand. The left hand is associated with bathroom hygiene and considered unclean.

4. A handshake is the common greeting between men.

True

When making a social call or entering a room where several men are gathered, shaking hands is customary.

5. Refusing an offer of tea or bread, if one is not hungry, is acceptable.

False

It is considered rude to decline an offer of either tea or bread. The response "oling" (just one helping) is a face-saving way to avoid refusals.

CHAPTER 4: URBAN LIFE

Urbanization

The urban population of Uzbekistan is approximately 36% of the total population and is growing at a rate of about 1.4% per year.¹⁴⁵ This growth is attributable to the creation of new urban areas such as Almalyk, Navoi, and Zarafshan, rather than to migration from the countryside.¹⁴⁶ Urbanization has compromised the government's ability to provide municipal services, including health, social, and educational programs. Public transportation, such as integration of urban and suburban transport systems, housing demands, and unplanned growth also challenge urban governance.¹⁴⁷ Larger cities such as Tashkent and Samarkand have slum-like, socially depressed areas where there are large numbers of unskilled and marginally employed workers.¹⁴⁸



© whl.travel / flickr.com
Urban traffic, Tashkent

Healthcare

In the early 1990s, Uzbekistan attempted to continue the Soviet-era policy of free medical care while simultaneously endorsing the concept of privatized healthcare. However, the accessibility of healthcare resources has declined.¹⁴⁹ Medical equipment, medications, and supplies are not always available; doctors and hospitals accept cash payments only.¹⁵⁰ The healthcare system is considered inadequate.



Courtesy ZdravPlus Project
Healthcare provider

¹⁴⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan: People," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹⁴⁶ Mansurovs.com, "Uzbekistan: Population," n.d., <http://mansurovs.com/Umid/Main/Uzbekistan/Population/population.html>

¹⁴⁷ UNESCO Social and Human Sciences, "National Roundtable of the Uzbekistan MOST National Liaison Committee," 2 June 2005, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001456/145631e.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ UN-Habitat, "Poverty, Crime and Migration Are Acute Issues as Eastern European Cities Continue to Grow," 11 January 2005, http://www.citymayors.com/society/easteurope_cities.html

¹⁴⁹ Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Uzbekistan," December 2007, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2924.htm>

¹⁵⁰ Consulate General of Uzbekistan in New York City, "About Uzbekistan: Health," n.d., <http://www.uzbekconsulny.org/uzbekistan/health/>

Exchange 21: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	yaQin atrofda kasalKhona borma?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	Ha, shaHar markazida

Healthcare delivery systems are different in the rural and urban areas of the country. In rural areas, the former system is being replaced with a two-tiered system in which there are primary care units and outpatient clinics. Many rural hospitals have been closed. In the urban areas, primary and secondary services are provided by polyclinics. These clinics, instead of separate facilities for adults, women, and children, as in the past, provide primary care for all people.¹⁵¹

Exchange 22: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	telefonigizdan foydalansam maylima?
Local:	Sure.	albata

Basic preventive medicine and emergency services are provided free of charge to all citizens. Currently, extended and specialized care is available only to those who can afford private treatment. Large companies offer their own health plans. Some companies even have their own medical departments for workers and can be accessed for a fee.^{152, 153}

Exchange 23: Is Dr. Kalimov in, sir?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Kalimov in, sir?	dohktor karimof shu yerdamilar?
Local:	No.	yohQ

Environmental pollution is the chief factor affecting the health of people in Uzbekistan. The poor health of much of the population correlates with the incidence of toxic industrial waste and high levels of air and water pollution, vestiges of Soviet-era neglect.¹⁵⁴

Contaminated drinking water is the second major cause of health problems in Uzbekistan. Wastewater in many towns is released without being treated at sewage treatment plants. Hospitals

¹⁵¹ Health Systems in Transition, "HiT Profile in Brief: Uzbekistan," 2008, http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0012/98895/E90673sum.pdf

¹⁵² Mohir Ahmedov et al., "Uzbekistan Health System Review," 2007, http://sc-healthreform.org.mk/web/files.php?force&file=country/Uzbekistan_2007_141848281.pdf

¹⁵³ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

¹⁵⁴ MaryLee Knowlton, *Cultures of the World: Uzbekistan* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Publishers, 2006).

in some parts of the country may not have running water.¹⁵⁵ Only 82% of the population has access to improved sources of drinking water.¹⁵⁶

Urban Employment

The government began transitioning to a market-based economy after independence in 1991. Although the rate and depth of the transition and liberalization have been rigidly controlled, the country has surprised many economists. Following its own path toward a modern economy, Uzbekistan has managed to avoid some of the worst effects of the global financial crisis of the late 1990s. The conclusion is that the country has been relatively successful in its transition.



© Sarah Olmstead
Cradle merchant

Exchange 24: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	oylangizda faQat siz ishlaysizma?
Local:	No.	yohQ

An estimated 1.1% of the population was unemployed in 2010 and an additional 20% was underemployed.¹⁵⁷ The rate of job creation is insufficient to meet the needs of the population, which suggests that workers will continue to face a shortage of opportunities.¹⁵⁸ In response to the problem, the government has begun a program designed to create industries and diversify the industrial sector.¹⁵⁹ The government is planning to create more than 950,000 jobs in the country in 2011, with approximately 600,000 of these jobs in the small business sector.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ World Health Organization, “National Planning Meeting on Improving Hospital Care for Children in Uzbekistan,” 14 November 2008, http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/83533/UZB_hosp_care_child.pdf

¹⁵⁶ UNICEF, “Uzbekistan: Statistics,” 2004, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_statistics.html

¹⁵⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, “Uzbekistan: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹⁵⁸ UNDP, “Addressing Urban Poverty in Uzbekistan in the Context of the Economic Crisis,” 2010, http://mdgnet.undp.org/ext/Policy_Brief-PSIA-Uzbekistan-eng-17.03-final_draft.pdf

¹⁵⁹ Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States, “Uzbekistan Adopts Programme on Developing Industry in 2011–2015,” 21 December 2015, <http://www.uzbekistan.org/news/archive/889/>

¹⁶⁰ Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States, “Over 219,000 New Jobs Created in Uzbekistan in 1Q 2011,” 18 March 2011, <http://www.uzbekembassypakistan.org/index.php?q=content/over-219000-new-jobs-created-uzbekistan-1q-2011>

The Mahalla

The center of urban life for Uzbeks is the *mahalla* (or neighborhood). A typical mahalla might encompass a large apartment building or an area of freestanding homes. The average mahalla has about 2,000 people. Within each mahalla, families join together and help each other with all sorts of needs, including home improvement, elder care, or even cleaning the neighborhood streets.



© fantoraygun / flickr.com
Mahalla, Khiva

Each mahalla elects a chair and a group of advisors who act as the local governing council. The council settles disputes and makes local decisions. No other institution has as much influence as the mahalla. The government uses these institutions as a means of maintaining its power. Local leaders have total control over how assistance is disbursed among the members.¹⁶¹

Education

The Ministry of Education credits free public education for its 99.3% national literacy rate.¹⁶² The public schooling system consists of approximately 9,700 basic schools. The rapidly increasing population of school-aged children has put significant pressures on the educational system. One result of these pressures has been that compulsory education has been reduced from 11 to 9 years.²¹ Educational opportunities in urban areas are more plentiful than in rural areas.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, public education is equitable and not fraught with sex discrimination. Uzbekistan educates 93% of all school-age females and 96% of all school-age males.



© upyemoz / flickr.com
School children, Bukhara

Higher education is available in Uzbekistan, but colleges and universities are not free. Some government grants and stipends are available to cover tuition, but increased numbers of qualified applicants are no longer able to afford university education.^{164, 165}

¹⁶¹ BookRags, "Mahalla," 2011, <http://www.bookrags.com/research/mahalla-ema-03/>

¹⁶² Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹⁶³ UNICEF, "Uzbekistan: Statistics," n.d., http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_statistics.html

¹⁶⁴ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

¹⁶⁵ Toshtemir Majidov, Dipak Ghosh, and Kobil Ruziev, "Keeping Up with Revolutions: Evolution of Higher Education in Uzbekistan," January 2009, University of Stirling, http://www.educationdev.net/educationdev/Docs/u_6.PDF

National leaders in education have responded positively to international initiatives aimed at aiding higher education in Uzbekistan and integrating colleges and universities into the global academic network. Several developmental projects have been implemented in the past few years. In August 2001, the University of Maryland announced the first virtual university in Central Asia, making distance learning available in Uzbekistan.¹⁶⁶ Lastly, the University of Westminster (U.K.) established an endowed research post in Knowledge Economy at the Tashkent University in 2006. These types of changes are bringing American-style education and distance learning techniques to the region.

Housing

Adequate urban housing is needed in most of the Central Asian republics, including Uzbekistan where the role of the state in providing housing is shrinking. The housing shortage is linked to the post-independence transition from a planned economy to privatization and a free-market economy.¹⁶⁷ Most housing is from the Soviet era and consists of overcrowded, six- or nine-story apartment blocks assembled from prefabricated concrete slabs.



© Arthur Chapman
Apartments in Uzbekistan

Exchange 25: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	bu yerda Qancha odam yashaydi?
Local:	Ten.	ohnta

The growing population is struggling to cope with a shortage of jobs and the dwindling availability of family dwellings.¹⁶⁸ Landowners are reluctant to convert agricultural land for housing purposes because land provides more income from cash crops such as cotton.

Exchange 26: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	bu yerning egasi sizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

These conditions notwithstanding, experts in regional development report a recent surge in real estate activity in the Ferghana Valley, a portion of which lies within Uzbekistan. The funds driving this land development activity are generated largely through foreign currency transfers

¹⁶⁶ University of Maryland, UMD Newsdesk, "Maryland Will Help Uzbekistan Create a Virtual University," Maryland Moments, August 2001, http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/facts/mm/01_02/aug.cfm

¹⁶⁷ USAID, "Supporting Development of Housing Sector: Professional Program for a Delegation from Uzbekistan," May 2009, <http://www.gi-consortium.org/TOPRINTUZBEKISTANNEWSLETTER.pdf>

¹⁶⁸ USAID, "Central Asia Brief," 2002–2006, <http://www.makingcitieswork.org/urbanWorld/central-asia>

by Uzbek labor migrants. In recent years, Uzbek migrants working abroad have transferred approximately USD 500 billion annually to Uzbekistan.¹⁶⁹

Restaurants and Dining Out

Visitors to Uzbekistan’s major cities may be invited to dine in a restaurant instead of at someone’s home. Restaurants are abundant in Tashkent, Samarkand, or Bukhara.



© Isriya Pairepairit
Tashkent food

Exchange 27: I’d like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I’d like some hot soup.	menga isiQ shohrva olip keling
Local:	Sure.	Albata

The ever popular *chaikhana* or teahouse is a time-honored place for men to gather on a carpeted wooden dais with *piyolas* (decorated glass tea cups). Here they swap the latest news over *shashlik* (skewered meat), *plov* (the national rice dish), or *laghman* (mutton with wheat noodles).¹⁷⁰

Exchange 28: I would like coffee or tea.

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	men kohfe yioki choyichaman
Local:	Sure.	Albata

Restaurants in Uzbekistan serve many different types of food, from Continental to Russian, Korean, Chinese, and Indian. Most hotels offer Russian food and will serve specialties such as *strogen* (beef stroganoff). Food can also be purchased from street stalls, which often sell *lipioshka* (unleavened bread), *samsa* (samosas), and *manty* (meat dumplings).¹⁷¹

Exchange 29: What type of meat is this?

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	bu nimaning gohshti?
Local:	Lamb.	Qohy gohshti

¹⁶⁹ Alisher Khamidov, “Real Estate Booming in Ferghana Valley,” EurasiaNet, 8 February 2007, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav080207.shtml>

¹⁷⁰ Afsona Travel, “Uzbekistan: Traditions,” n.d., <http://afsona-travel.com/index.php?page=90>

¹⁷¹ Maps of World, “Uzbekistan Restaurants,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/uzbekistan/travel/restaurants.html>

Alcoholic beverages, both domestic and imported, are popular and readily available along with hookah smoking and dancing in many of the nightclubs.¹⁷² *Shampanski*, a sparkling wine, is available in all restaurants. A popular yogurt drink, *kefir*, is served at breakfast.



© AudreyH / flickr.com
Chaikhana, Samarkand

Exchange 30: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	nonishta buyirsam bohladima?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

It is understood that when invited to a meal in a restaurant, the host will pay. The concept of “going Dutch” is not familiar to Uzbeks. If foreigners are dining together they will be presented with one bill at the end of the meal. Meals are generally inexpensive whether purchased at a restaurant or a street vendor.¹⁷³

Exchange 31: Put this all in one bill.

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill.	bularning hamasini birga Hisoplang
Local:	Okay.	Khohb bohlada

Gratuities are not expected, but a tip of 10% of the total is appreciated and creates a favorable impression. Some restaurants may include a service fee on the bill, in which case a tip is not necessary.¹⁷⁴



© Isriya Pairepairit
Uzbek food

Exchange 32: Do you have dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have dessert?	shrinliklar borma?
Local:	Yes, we have fruit, pastries and ice cream.	ha bizda mevalar pshiriQlar va muzQaimoQ bor

¹⁷² iExplore, Uzbekistan Food & Dining, 1999–2008, <http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Uzbekistan/Dining>

¹⁷³ Numbeo, “Prices in Uzbekistan,” November 2010, http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_result.jsp?country=Uzbekistan

¹⁷⁴ Uzintour, “About Uzbekistan: Useful Information: Tipping,” 2011, http://www.uzintour.com/en/about_uzbekistan/useful_info/Tipping

It is common for Uzbeks to wash their hands before a meal and, in Islamic fashion, to wash their hands and rinse their mouths following a meal. This is done in the restroom or in an adjacent ablution area.

Exchange 33: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	hojatKhonangiz Qayerda?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	ana u yerda chaptagi Khona

Markets

Few Uzbek cities have anything resembling a Western shopping mall. However, all have a shopping bazaar area, usually in the older part of town. These open-air markets are not only

the center of the Uzbekistan economy, they are also the social centers of daily life for many Uzbeks.¹⁷⁵



© Chris Shervey
Chorsu Bazaar, Tashkent

Exchange 34: Is the bazaar nearby?

Soldier:	Is the bazaar nearby?	bozor yaQin atrofdama?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	Ha, ana u yerda ohngda

In Tashkent the bazaar region’s shopping stalls and open-air markets display all kinds of handcrafted and decorative items made of glass, cotton, silk, leather, wood, and metal. Open from mid-morning to late evening, the markets usually close for an extended lunch hour from 2 to 4 p.m.

Exchange 35: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	u yerda necha vaQt bohlasiz?
Local:	Three more hours.	yana uch soat

Rugs have been made for centuries in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. These rugs are most often red in color, and the most commonly used motif is called *gul*.¹⁷⁶ However, today the carpets traditionally attributed to Bukhara are actually imports.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ East Site, “Uzbek Bazaars and Markets,” 2010, <http://www.east-site.com/uzbek-bazaars>

¹⁷⁶ eRug.com, “Turkmenistan/Uzbekistan,” 2010, http://www.erugallery.com/learnrugs/learn_detail/make/lrn_make_turkmenistan.htm

¹⁷⁷ Artifact, “Bukhara,” n.d., <http://www.artifact.com/subcollection/bukhara-eo4ufn30b8>

Exchange 36: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	bu pulga gilam sotib olsam bohladima?
Local:	No.	yohQ

Merchants often occupy narrow niches in the bazaars and have limited space in which to display their wares. Large domed pavilions hold rows of merchants situated according to what they are selling. Food, ranging from fresh fruit to nuts and from spices to prepared foods, is displayed on tables in stalls; rugs can be found in separate rows. Other rows may include small workshops where craftsmen sell their jewelry, wood carvings, and other handcrafted items.



© Benjuni / flickr.com
Tashkent Craft Center

Exchange 37: Do you sell piyolas?

Soldier:	Do you sell piyolas?	siz piyola sotasizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Rugs, clothing, and embroidered goods may be found in various colors and sizes. A shopper interested in seeing a wider selection should ask the owner if he has additional samples.

Exchange 38: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	sizda bulardan yana borma?
Local:	No.	yohQ

Bargaining is an essential part of shopping in Central Asia. Once begun, bargaining continues seriously until both parties reach their limits, whether or not anything is purchased. Walking away without bargaining can be considered rude.¹⁷⁸



© Liz Wade
Uzbek market

¹⁷⁸ Abazov Rafis, Culture and Customs of the Central Asian Republics, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 244.

Exchange 39: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	yaQinroQdan kohrsam bohladima?
Local:	Sure.	albata

Foreigners should know the fair market value of an item before making an offer. Likewise, they must consider the limits of what they are prepared to pay. Many merchants will accept dollars as payment.

Exchange 40: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	buni maydalab beraolasizma?
Local:	No.	yohQ

The national currency, *sum*, is worth 100 *tiyin*. It is available in coins of 1, 3, 5, and 10 *tiyin*, and in banknotes of 25, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 *sum*. The U.S. dollar is sometimes an alternative currency, but it is not legal tender and should be exchanged only in hotels and banks.¹⁷⁹



© Patrick Barry
Uzbek currency

Exchange 41: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	aQsh pulini Qabul Qilasizma?
Local:	No, we only accept som.	yohQ, biz faQat sohm Qabul Qilamis

Currency must be declared on arrival at customs in Uzbekistan. An unauthorized currency transaction can quickly lead to incidents involving the police.¹⁸⁰ It is unwise to display large amounts of currency, foreign or domestic, in the bazaars.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ iExplore, “Uzbekistan Travel Guide: Uzbekistan Shopping and Exchange Rate,” 2010, <http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Uzbekistan/Shopping>

¹⁸⁰ Visit Uzbekistan Travel, “Customs Rules and Regulations in Uzbekistan,” 30 March 2011, <http://www.visituzbekistan.travel/usefulinfo/customs.php>

¹⁸¹ Bradley Mayhew, *Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007).

Exchange 42: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	mendan biror narsa sotib oling, iltimos
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	kechirasiz, menda pul Qolmada

Bazaars are frequented by street vendors and petty criminals looking for opportunities to exploit foreigners.¹⁸² Pickpockets are also a problem in urban areas. Thus it is advisable to not wear expensive jewelry.

Exchange 43: Give me money.

Local:	Give me money.	menga pul bering
Soldier:	I don't have any.	menda pul yohQ

Transportation

Uzbekistan has 86,496 km (53,746 miles) of roadways, of which 75,511 km (46,920 miles) are paved; 3,645 km (2,264 miles) of railway lines link the major cities and production centers of the country with domestic destinations and the major cities of Asia and Eastern Europe.¹⁸³



© erikenmieke / flickr.com
Train station, "East Express"

Exchange 44: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	yaQin atrofda poyezd bekati borma?
Local:	No.	Ha

Six of the twelve airports have been designated as international departure and arrival centers. Uzbekistan Airways services twelve domestic airports and foreign destinations such as Beijing, Moscow, Tel Aviv, Paris, Frankfurt, and London.^{184, 185}

¹⁸²Department of Foreign Affairs, "Uzbekistan," 28 November 2006, <http://dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=448>

¹⁸³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Uzbekistan: Transportation," in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹⁸⁴ Development of Tourism Exchange Between Italy and Uzbekistan, "Geografic Area," n.d., <http://uzbekistan.progetti.informest.it/english/geografia.HTM>

¹⁸⁵ Maps of India, Uzbekistan Airways—A New Beginning," 2009, <http://www.mapsofindia.org/airlines-in-india/uzbekistan-airways.html>

Exchange 45: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	Qaysi kohcha tayoragoHga olib borada?
Local:	The road heading east.	sharQ tononga yohlangan kohcha

Taxicabs are easily found in the larger cities such as Tashkent. Many taxis, however, are unlicensed, so it is best to use ones that are officially marked. Fares should be negotiated prior to entering the vehicle.¹⁸⁶

Exchange 46: Where can I get a cab?

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	taksini Qayerdan ushlasam bohlada?
Local:	Over there.	ana u yerda

A state-regulated transport company, Oriental Express Central Asia (OrexCA), is the principal provider of bus, minibus, taxi, and auto rental services. OrexCA provides regular and reliable transport between major urban centers. OrexCA offices are usually in city centers, adjacent to the main square.¹⁸⁷ OrexCA hourly rates are fixed and published for tourists.¹⁸⁸ These prices include fuel and the driver's fees.



Courtesy Wikimedia.org
Tram, Tashkent

Exchange 47: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	aftobus yaQin orada keladima?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Silkroad Transportation, in Tashkent, coordinates rental cars with drivers at rates comparable with the state-regulated agency. Well-known hotels in Uzbekistan can arrange a car rental with a driver. Currently, rentals without a driver are not available.^{189, 190}

¹⁸⁶ Oriental Express Central Asia, "Transportation Services in Uzbekistan," 2003–2011, <http://www.orexca.com/transport.shtml>

¹⁸⁷ Oriental Express Central Asia, "Public Transport in Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan Airways, Uzbekistan Railway and Private Transport," 2011, <http://www.orexca.com/transport.shtml>

¹⁸⁸ Oriental Express Central Asia, "Transportation Services in Uzbekistan," 2003–2011, http://www.orexca.com/transport_auto.shtml

¹⁸⁹ Silk Road Transportation, "Transportation Services in Uzbekistan," n.d., <http://silkroadtransportation.com/en/tariffs.php>

¹⁹⁰ A-prokat.com, "Car Rental in Uzbekistan," 2007, http://a-prokat.com/car_rental_uzbekistan.htm

Exchange 48: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	Qayerdan ijaraga mashina olsam bohlada?
Local:	Downtown.	shaKhar markazidan

Gas stations can be found along the major roadways and in urban areas. However, they are less frequent in rural areas.

Exchange 49: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	yaQin atrofda yoQilghi stansyasi borma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Auto mechanics can also be found in urban areas, but they may not have access to all the necessary car parts for a repair.

Exchange 50: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	yaQin atrofda mashinani tuzatadigan yaKhshi usta borma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Road conditions throughout Uzbekistan may be poor and surfaces uneven, so drivers should exercise caution.¹⁹¹ The main roads in central Tashkent are maintained, but secondary roads, especially in the Tien Shan and Fan Mountains, are generally in very poor condition. They should not be attempted without a four-wheel drive vehicle.



© UZNEWS.NET / flickr.com
Urban traffic

Driving at night can be very dangerous because many roads lack streetlights. Rural roadways are rarely lit. Driving outside of Tashkent at night is not advisable.

Livestock and farm equipment, including animal-drawn carts without reflectors, are common on both rural and urban roads. Local drivers do not follow generally prescribed safe driving techniques. Pedestrians often cross without looking.

It has been reported that police often stop drivers for even minor violations or to check documents. There are reports of foreign drivers being harassed by police. Bribes are sometimes demanded by the police.

¹⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, "Uzbekistan: Country Specific Information," 2011, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1057.html

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Over 15% of the Uzbek population has no access to improved sources of drinking water.
True

Only 82% of Uzbeks have access to improved sources of drinking water.

2. The transition to a market-based economy has not been successful in Uzbekistan.
False

Uzbekistan has avoided some of the worst effects of the global financial crisis of the late 1990s. The country has been relatively successful in its transition.

3. While shopping in a bazaar, walking away without bargaining can be considered rude.
True

Bargaining is an essential part of Central Asian shopping. Once begun, bargaining continues seriously until both parties reach their limits, whether or not anything is purchased. Walking away without bargaining can be considered rude.

4. Limited access to hospitals and medical clinics is the most influential factor on the population's health.
False

Environmental pollution is the chief factor affecting the health of people in Uzbekistan. The poor health of much of the population correlates with the country's environmental pollution.

5. When invited to dine at a restaurant by Uzbeks, it is understood that the host pays the bill.
True

If invited to dinner, it is understood that the host will pay. The concept of "going Dutch" is not familiar to Uzbeks.

CHAPTER 5: RURAL LIFE

Rural Economy

Sixty-three percent of Uzbekistan's population lives in rural areas. About 60% of these people depend on farming for their livelihoods. The typical farm is run by a single family. Grain, fruit, sheep, cattle, goats, and other livestock are raised, but cotton is the number one cash crop.¹⁹² Some rural people make their living as shopkeepers, miners, or mechanics, or they work in agricultural activities such as harvesting crops. Others work in education or industry.¹⁹³



© Peretz Partensky
Cows in Afrosiab

Cotton or “white gold” generates most of the Uzbekistan's export revenue and accounts for about 40% of the country's hard currency. Uzbekistan is the world's fifth-largest cotton producer and trails behind only the United States in the amount of cotton it exports.¹⁹⁴

During the Soviet era, large *kolkhozes*, or collective farms, were created from small farms. Following independence, collective farms were to be reformed and workers were supposed to be part owners and permitted, in theory, to grow whatever they wanted. The *kolkhoz* system is still operational and is still run by collective managers, known as *kolkhozi*. The government has begun experimenting with privatization of land, but agricultural plots are not included.¹⁹⁵ Instead, “privatization” of agricultural lands means that farm plots are leased to families for a maximum of 49 years.¹⁹⁶ Land, subsoil assets, water and air space, animals and crops are exclusively owned by the state and may not be bought or sold.¹⁹⁷

Village Life

Life in the rural areas goes on at a slower pace than in the urban centers. Multigenerational families are still commonplace. Family is the main focus of daily life. The age-old rituals of birth, death, marriage, and other cultural events go on as they have for generations.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Bella Waters, *Uzbekistan in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Visual Geography Series, 2007).

¹⁹³ R. Khanam, ed., *Encyclopaedic Ethnography of Middle-East and Central Asia* (New Delhi: Global vision Publishing House, 2004), 831–838.

¹⁹⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, “Uzbekistan: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 6 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

¹⁹⁵ Business and Economics, Uzbekistan, “Land Privatisation,” 27 July 2006, <http://www.neweurasia.net/business-and-economics/land-privatisation-finally/>

¹⁹⁶ Mika-Petteri Torhonen, “Land Tenure in Transition: Case Uzbekistan,” International Federation of Surveyors, April 2002, http://www.fig.net/pub/fig_2002/Ts7-6/TS7_6_torhonen.pdf

¹⁹⁷ Kuantbay Bektemirov and Eduard Rahimov, “Local Government in Uzbekistan,” *Developing New Rules in the Old Environment*, eds. Igor Munteanu and Victor Popa (Budapest, Hungary: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative Open Society Institute, 2001) 469–520, <http://lgi.osi.hu/publications/2001/84/Ch9-Uzbekistan.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ Bella Aters, *Uzbekistan in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Visual Geography Series, 2007).

Middle-aged men in rural villages are likely to spend many hours socializing, playing cards, eating, drinking tea, and discussing important social issues of the day. Often, after a day of Sunday shopping at the bazaar, people will meet informally and socialize.¹⁹⁹

Colorful traditional clothing is a common sight in rural areas of Uzbekistan. Men wear brightly colored striped robes, black boots, and embroidered skullcaps. Women wear colorful dresses, made of silk, cotton, or velvet, and headscarves. Soccer and wrestling are regular pastimes. Traditional horseback games are played on special occasions.²⁰⁰



© lensfodder / flickr.com
Rural barn

In the courtyards of their homes, farmers often cultivate small subsistence gardens that yield most of the food a *dekan* (peasant) family consumes. Surplus food is sold or bartered in local open-air bazaars by farmers who live in an almost cashless economy. People walk a lot and visit their neighbors. Men spend off-hours in the village *chaikhana* or tea shop. Typically, only the manager of the collective farm is part of the ruling political class. These managers, who serve as mayors and village leaders, are often former Communist Party officers who have retained their privileged positions and power during the transition to independence.²⁰¹

Transportation

The network of rail and road transportation still exists primarily to service the agricultural and mineral sectors. Cotton and minerals are transported in government-owned trucks and trains to government cotton gins or refineries. Passenger services between villages and nearby towns and cities are largely provided by an aging fleet of government-owned Soviet-era buses from the 1970s. Because the transportation infrastructure of Uzbekistan is inadequately developed, rural areas are not likely to derive any benefit from tourism in the near future.²⁰²



© Felix O / flickr.com
Soviet truck, Bukhara

¹⁹⁹ Russell Zanca, *Life in a Muslim Uzbek Village: Cotton Farming After Communism* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Publishing, 2011).

²⁰⁰ Countries Quest, "The People of Uzbekistan, Way of Life," n.d., http://www.countriesquest.com/asia/uzbekistan/the_people_of_uzbekistan/way_of_life.htm

²⁰¹ Calum MacLeod and Bradley Mayhew, *Uzbekistan: The Golden Road to Samarkand* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004).

²⁰² Euromonitor International, "Travel and Tourism in Uzbekistan, Executive Summary," May 2007, <http://www.euromonitor.com/travel-and-tourism-in-iraq/report>

Healthcare

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the people in rural areas had little or no access to adequate medical care. With a loan from the World Bank in 1999, the government created rural medical stations called SVPs. Patients can receive primary care from qualified doctors in the SVPs. These healthcare centers are equipped with the latest medical equipment.²⁰³ To date there are more than 3,200 primary care rural medical stations.²⁰⁴



© erikenmieke / flickr.com
Village doctor in training

Exchange 51: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	nima bohlganini bilasizma?
Local:	No.	yohQ

Under this system, basic care facilities in rural areas are viewed as satellites of major urban centers. They are staffed by a regional physician who is allocated on the basis of population statistics and may provide care at several facilities in each district.²⁰⁵ By 2008, the number of SVPs that were properly equipped had risen to 87.5%. Both access to and the quality of healthcare in rural areas have greatly increased in recent years.²⁰⁶ Since the SVPs have been put into place, the number of medical visits has increased by nearly 20%.²⁰⁷ More specialized care is available in urban centers, some of which is at private clinics and provided at a cost to the patient.

Exchange 52: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	yaQin atrofda shifoKhona borma?
Local:	Yes, over there.	Ha, u yerda

²⁰³ World Bank, “Overhauling Medical Care in Rural Uzbekistan,” n.d., <http://www.worldbank.org/uz/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/UZBEKISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20225480~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:294188,00.html>

²⁰⁴ Oleg Gaevoy, “Healthcare in Focus,” Uzbekistan Today, 19 November 2010, http://www.ut.uz/eng/opinion/healthcare_in_focus47.mgr

²⁰⁵ Mohir Ahrmedov et al., “Primary Health Care Reform in Uzbekistan,” *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management* 22 (2007): 301–318, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hpm.897/abstract>

²⁰⁶ International Development Association, “Improving Access to Health Services in Rural Areas,” September 2009, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,contentMDK:22301658~menuPK:4754051~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html>

²⁰⁷ International Development Association, “Improving Access to Health Services in Rural Areas,” September 2009, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,contentMDK:22301658~menuPK:4754051~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html>

Education

The constitution of Uzbekistan provides free education to all citizens and basic schooling is mandatory through the first nine grades. About 80% of the country's approximately 9,700 basic schools are in rural areas and provide education to about 6.5 million pupils. However, these schools are poorly maintained and lack modern teaching aids. Moreover, teachers are inadequately trained, and classrooms lack heating and sanitary facilities.²⁰⁸



© rustinpc / flickr.com
Dancing at school, Bukhara

Exchange 53: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	yaQin atrofda maktab borma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Education in rural areas is often preempted by needs of the agricultural economy. When the cotton is harvested, both teachers and pupils are taken from the schools and forced to work in the fields.²⁰⁹

Exchange 54: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	bolalaringiz maktabga borishadima?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

The country's schools were targeted in 2007 by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for developmental assistance in three areas: policy planning, governance, and management; curriculum and textbook modernization; and upgrades to information technology.²¹⁰ About 670,000 students and nearly 63,000 teachers in three of Uzbekistan's poorest rural regions—Tashkent district, Surkhandarya, and Kashkadarya—will be the main beneficiaries of this aid project.²¹¹ Earlier, in 2004, the U.S. government launched a program, School Connectivity for Uzbekistan, to promote the use of information technology and internet in Uzbek schools. Under this program the number of internet users has increased dramatically.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Asian Development Bank Consultancy, "Proposed Loan Republic of Uzbekistan: Rural Basic Education Project," November 2007, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/RRPs/UZB/40049-UZB-RRP.pdf>

²⁰⁹ IRIN UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Uzbekistan: Focus on Rural Schools," 10 August 2004, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=24481>

²¹⁰ Asian Development Bank Consultancy, "Proposed Loan Republic of Uzbekistan: Rural Basic Education Project," November 2007, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/RRPs/UZB/40049-UZB-RRP.pdf>

²¹¹ Asian Development Bank, "ADB Helps Improve Education in Uzbekistan," 11 December 2007, <http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2007/12320-uzbekistani-educational-projects/default.asp>

²¹² Ari Katz, "Internet Use in Uzbekistan's Schools," *Digital Divide Network*, 10 December 2004, <http://www.digitaldivide.net/articles/view.php?ArticleID=28>

Gender Issues

In the Soviet era, men and women had equal access to education, health-care, and employment. Gender equity was largely confined to the workplace and connected to work output. This ideology did not penetrate the home, where women were wives and mothers and had the primary responsibility of nurturing the family. Women put in long hours of unpaid labor at home.²¹³ Gender issues played an important role in the socialization of Central Asia. One of the main efforts of the Soviet *hujum*, or socialist emancipation of women, was getting rid of the veil. However, in resistance to the Soviet influence and as part of restoring Central Asian identity in Uzbekistan, the veil became something of an icon of cultural autonomy. Minority forces advocating Islamization of Uzbek society have made a return to the veil the touchstone of their campaigns.²¹⁴ In the postindependence era, the government continues to endorse gender equity and has written the requirement of such into the constitution. In failing to endorse Islamists’ demands for a return to the veil, the government has taken an implicit stand.



© lux & pixel / flickr.com
Women, Samarkand

Recent efforts to establish a strong national identity have resulted in more restrictions on women and girls in rural areas. The rate of female participation in higher education has dropped. The marriage age for women is decreasing. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get a divorce. Increasing restrictions on women’s roles in public life are resulting in women being excluded from public and professional roles in favor of traditional roles. Some anecdotal reports suggest that rates of violence against women are rising as are instances of trafficking.^{215, 216}

Who is in Charge?

The levels of governance in Uzbekistan predate the Soviet era and have remained unchanged. The country is divided into 12 *viloyat*, or regions. These in turn consist of *hokimiat*, or districts, presided over by the *hokim*, or district leader.

Exchange 55: Do you know this area very well?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	bu yerni juda yaKhshi bilasizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

²¹³ Asian Development Bank, “Country Gender Assessment: Uzbekistan,” December 2005, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Country-Gender-Assessments/cga-uzbekistan.pdf>

²¹⁴ History Cooperative, “Book Review: Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia,” *Journal of World History*, June 2005, http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jwh/16.2/br_7.html

²¹⁵ Susan Somach and Deborah Rubin, “Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics,” March 2010, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/CAR_Gender_Assessment_Mar-2010_508.pdf

²¹⁶ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, “Uzbekistan: Executive Summary,” 2011, <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual10/MAAUZ00110p.pdf>

At the communal level of governance is the *mahalla*, or neighborhood. Household representatives from the mahalla elect a committee (*kengash*) as the head of the mahalla. In 2010, 12 % of all mahallas were headed by women. Community elders are also included. The committee elects a chair known as the *aqsaqal*, or white beard. The deputy chair is called the *muovin*.²¹⁷

Exchange 56: Does your elder live here?

Soldier:	Does your elder live here?	oQsoQolingiz shu yerda istiQomat Qiladima?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Foreigners are routinely introduced to the aqsaqal as a matter of course, because entertaining foreigners without official sanction can bring about complications for local nationals. These elders are knowledgeable about most events in their mahalla, and their assistance can be of help to any visitor. When meeting with the aqsaqal, greet him with great respect.

Exchange 57: Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.

Soldier:	Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.	hurmatli rayis, bizga sizning yordamingiz / maslaHatingiz / fikringiz kerak
Local:	Yes.	yaKhshi

Checkpoints

Checkpoints, both at national border crossings and at points along major domestic transportation arteries, are a necessary way of life in Uzbekistan. The government tightly controls official border crossings, which can be closed without any prior notification.²¹⁸ The land borders between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are closed to foreigners without prior government authorization.²¹⁹



© upyemoz / flickr.com
Tajik-Uzbek border

²¹⁷ Kuantbay Bektemirov and Eduard Rahimov, “Local Government in Uzbekistan,” *Developing New Rules in the Old Environment*, eds. Igor Munteanu and Victor Popa (Budapest, Hungary: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative Open Society Institute, 2001), 469–520, <http://igi.osi.hu/publications/2001/84/Ch9-Uzbekistan.pdf>

²¹⁸ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Travel Warning: Uzbekistan,” 25 April 2011, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5441.html

²¹⁹ Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Travel Advice: Uzbekistan,” 27 April 2011, <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/uzbekistan>

Exchange 58: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	eng yaQin tekshiru bohlima Qayerda joylashgan?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	bu yerdan iki kilometr narida

For native Uzbeks, a checkpoint means producing the national identity card each citizen above the age of 16 is required to carry. These cards are issued by the local district police offices.

Exchange 59: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	bor Hujatingiz manabularma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

The national borders between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are not clearly delineated, which adds to problems. Negotiations are currently in progress to try to demarcate the borders and set up appropriate checkpoints.²²⁰ In the mahallas and public areas of the Andijon Region, new anti-terrorism checkpoints are being built in an effort to strengthen security.²²¹



© Peretz Partensky
Uzbek-Kyrgyz border

Exchange 60: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	mashinaga tegishli Hujatlarni kohrsating
Local:	OK.	Khohp

Foreigners are required to produce a valid visa and the customs declaration of portable currency they receive on entering the country. The Uzbek government is strict on prohibiting the movement of Islamic insurgents and illegal weapons through its territory. Travelers should have multiple-entry Uzbek visas even when traveling within the country. Some domestic travel in the border regions requires brief crossovers to other countries.²²²

²²⁰ Bakyt Ibraimov, "Checkpoint Closing Adds New Layer to Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Border Dispute," *Central Asia Online*, 4 March 2010,

http://centralasiaonline.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/features/main/2010/03/04/feature-02

²²¹ Uznews.net, "Blast-hit Uzbek Towns Open Extra Anti-terrorism Street Checkpoints," 18 August 2009, http://www.uznews.net/news_single.php?lng=en&sub=top&cid=30&nid=11085

²²² Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Travel Warning: Uzbekistan," 25 April 2011, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5441.html

Exchange 61: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	sizda Qurol borma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Checkpoints run by the national police may involve stopping vehicles and searching the contents. Routine questioning frequently involves passengers exiting the vehicle but seldom includes bodily searches.

Exchange 62: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	iltimos, mashinadan chiQing
Local:	OK.	KhoHP

Visitors must comply with such searches and provide authorities any information requested.

Landmines

Uzbekistan has not signed the Land Mine Treaty and has not participated in any international forum for the limitation or eradication of landmines. Furthermore, Uzbekistan abstained from the December 2005 vote on land mine use in the U.N. General Assembly.²²³



© David Monniaux
Landmines

Exchange 63: Is this area mined?

Soldier:	Is this area mined?	bu atrof minalanganma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

The country’s official policy is that mines are essential to its national security and their use helps control the passage of weapons, narcotics, and terrorists. Visitors are urged to be careful when traveling in border regions with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.²²⁴ Land mines also pose a

²²³ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Uzbekistan: Cluster Munition Ban Policy,” 19 October 2010, http://www.the-monitor.org/custom/index.php/region_profiles/print_profile/196

²²⁴ Jim Heintz, “Ban Calls Uzbekistan’s Land Mines ‘Unacceptable,’ Urges Calm with Tajikistan over Hydro Dam,” Associated Press, 6 April 2010, <http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/cityregion/article/1007941>

considerable threat along the border region with Afghanistan and in the eastern region of the Ferghana Valley.²²⁵

²²⁵ Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Travel Advice: Uzbekistan," 27 April 2011, <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/uzbekistan>

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Almost half of Uzbekistan's total area is used for agricultural purposes.

False

Sixty-three percent of Uzbekistan's population lives in rural areas; 60% of these people depend on farming for their livelihoods.

2. During the cotton harvest, both teachers and pupils are required to help in the fields.

True

Education in rural areas is often preempted by needs of the agricultural economy. When the cotton is harvested, both teachers and pupils are taken from the schools and forced to work in the fields.

3. Every native Uzbek below the age of 16 is required to carry a national identity card.

False

Native Uzbeks above the age of 16 are required to carry a national identity card. These IDs are issued by the local district police offices.

4. The Soviet-implemented *kolkhozes* were dismantled and farmland was returned to individuals upon independence.

False

Following independence, collective farms were to be reformed. In fact, the *kolkhoz* system is still operational, changing little since independence.

5. A *kolkhoz* is overseen by the *aqsaqal*, or white beard.

False

The *kolkhozes* are managed by the *kolkhozi*. An *aqsaqal* (white beard or elder) oversees the *mahalla* (neighborhood).

CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE

Family Structure and Roles

Family life in Uzbekistan is very traditional, and the family plays a central role in the daily lives of most people. As is typical of Islamic culture, the elderly are highly respected within the household. Men are considered to be superior to women. In rural areas, which are generally more conservative, men and women eat at separate tables. Women do not join in conversations with men, even when entertaining guests. In cities, the customs may be more liberal. If a man wishes a female companion to eat at the same table, the host's wife may join the group with the husband's permission.²²⁶



© Sarah Olmstead
Family, Tashkent

The character of the Uzbek family as a social unit has changed somewhat over 150 years of foreign rule.²²⁷ Uzbeks retained their clan, or extended family, structure under czarist domination.²²⁸

Exchange 64: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	bu sizning butun oylangizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

Under Soviet rule beginning in the late 1920s, however, clans were required to forego large, hereditary landholdings in favor of collective farms or *kolkhozes*.²²⁹ Communist ideology de-emphasized the importance of membership in a clan as a source of identity. In sum, individuals no longer derived a sense of self from membership in a prestigious clan, but rather from their relation to and role in the workers' society.

Exchange 65: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	siz shu yerda kata bohlganmisiz?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

²²⁶ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

²²⁷ UN, "Demographic and Social Trends Affecting Families in the South and Central Asian Region," 2000, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtdesilva.pdf>

²²⁸ Kathleen Collins, *The Logic of Clan Politics in Central Asia: The Impact on Regime Transformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²²⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kolkhoz," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/321400/kolkhoz>

After the Soviet Union was disbanded in 1991, the nuclear family, rather than the extended clan, remained the center of relational life for Uzbeks. This focus continues, especially in urban areas where workers' apartments are small and unsuitable for more than five or six inhabitants.



© Arthur Chapman
Soviet apartments, Tashkent

Exchange 66: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	aka ukalaringiz borma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

The Typical Household

Urban families tend to average five members, whereas rural families tend to be slightly larger, with grandparents and unmarried women living in the same dwelling.^{230, 231}



© Leon Hart
Family, Bukhara

Exchange 67: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	bu sizning rafiqangizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

The society remains patriarchal and is about 88% Sunni Muslim, which influences the division of household responsibilities. Family roles derive from these factors. The father or husband is

²³⁰ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

²³¹ The Economist, "Uzbekistan: Population," 23 April 2002, http://www.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article_id=825335882&country_id=710000071&channel_id=190004019&category_id=240004024&refm=vwCat&page_title=Article&rf=0

head of the family or household. Wives, children, and unmarried women are under the authority of the husband or father.²³²

Exchange 68: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	bu sizning bolalaringizma?
Local:	Yes.	Ha

The mother runs the household with the support of daughters and other women living in the house. There is great respect for elders and the elderly as well as for visitors. This respect for guests is the source of Uzbekistan’s rich tradition of hospitality. All these traits are deeply rooted in the Muslim world.²³³

Exchange 69: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	bu odamlar oylangiz aazolarima?
Local:	No.	yohQ

Status of Women, Elderly, and Children

Women in Uzbekistan are traditionally subordinate to men. However, the transition to a modern society has brought with it some changes for women. More than 60% of women work outside the home; they are generally in lower-level jobs and are paid lower wages than men.²³⁴



© Laura e Fulvio / flickr.com
Elderly Uzbek men

Domestic violence is a serious problem. Because there are no official government statistics on the issue, it is difficult to know the exact degree of severity of the problem. Although punishable under the criminal code, domestic abuse problems are rarely brought to the courts and even less frequently are they punished.²³⁵

Women are granted many legal rights by the constitution and are protected by the criminal code. Women have the right to divorce, equal access to property (except land), the right to obtain a

²³² Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

²³³ W. C. Duncan, *Uzbekistan: A Short Road Traveled. My Peace Corps Experience, 2001* (Tennessee: Artifactman Publishing Co., 2005), 63–73.

²³⁴ Bella Waters, *Uzbekistan in Pictures*, (Minneapolis: Visual Geography Series, 2007).

²³⁵ Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, “Domestic Violence in Uzbekistan,” December 2000, <http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/uzbekreport.pdf>

bank loan, and freedom of dress. However, tradition often outweighs law, and it is difficult for women to receive their full rights under the law.²³⁶

Children as young as 7 often work in the cotton fields, rather than attending school. The central government is in charge of the practice of sending children to the fields. This organized campaign of child labor has sometimes been referred to as “slavery” and represents a serious violation of the rights of children. It deprives them of their education and often puts them at risk for serious health problems, injury and even death.^{237, 238} Current estimates are that as many as one in four Uzbek children between the ages of 5 and 15 work.²³⁹

The elderly are highly respected in Uzbek society. All elderly have high positions within the family. The elderly often remain at home in extended family situations instead of living in nursing homes.^{240, 241}

Marriage

In the Islamic culture of Uzbekistan, marriage is an expected part of life. Almost all men and women marry. Most marriages are arranged by the families involved. Women tend to marry in their early twenties and men in their mid-twenties.²⁴² Higher education tends to delay the age of marriage somewhat.²⁴³ Polygamy has been illegal since Soviet times. However, there are some indications that the practice is increasing, especially in the rural areas. Typically, polygamous unions involve an older male with a younger female from a poor family with limited prospects. The husband usually has a separate household for each wife.^{244, 245}

²³⁶ Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Uzbekistan,” n.d., <http://genderindex.org/country/uzbekistan>

²³⁷ International Labor Rights Forum, “Uzbekistan,” 2009, <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-labor/cotton-campaign/uzbekistan>

²³⁸ Association of Human Rights in central Asia, “Forced Labour in Uzbekistan,” February 2010, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/AHRCA_Uzbekistan_98.pdf

²³⁹ Bella Waters, *Uzbekistan in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Visual Geography Series, 2007).

²⁴⁰ Islam Guide, “How Do Muslims Treat the Elderly?” n.d., <http://www.islam-guide.com/ch3-15.htm>

²⁴¹ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

²⁴² United National Development Programme, “Uzbekistan in Figures: Gender: Average Age of Women at First Marriage,” 2011, http://statistics.design.uz/data_finder/186/

²⁴³ Wendy Mee, “Women in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” Asian Development Bank, February 2001, http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Uzbekistan/women_in_uzbekistan.pdf

²⁴⁴ Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Uzbekistan,” n.d., <http://genderindex.org/country/uzbekistan>

²⁴⁵ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

Wedding celebrations, which follow the brief Islamic *nikoh* or marriage contract, can be elaborate and extend over several days. While the groom's family often pays a bride price, the bride's family bears the expense of the wedding celebration.²⁴⁶ Newly married couples settle into a *mahalla* or neighborhood community that is presided over by the "white beard" elder or *aqsaqal*. As a structural unit, these self-governing communities provide support and assistance for the constituent families. They help to organize and arrange weddings, funerals, and other life event celebrations.²⁴⁷

It is common, especially in rural areas, for a newly married couple to move into the home of the groom's parents. The new bride is expected to take over all household chores. When the next son in the family gets married, the eldest son and his family may then move out into their own home.²⁴⁸

Divorce

The constitution gives men and women equal rights, but in matters of divorce the state impedes the process for women. Civil courts routinely delay divorce proceedings and frequently require a certificate of reconciliation from the local *mahalla*. The *aqsaqal* is more often than not opposed to divorce.²⁴⁹ The rate of divorce, which has actually declined since 1991, was 0.6% in 2006.²⁵⁰ Nonetheless, international human rights agencies report significant levels of domestic violence in Uzbekistan, with battered women receiving no state protection. Men can abuse their wives with relative impunity. Women, who have no legal recourse through prosecution or divorce because the police seldom prosecute men who abuse their wives, sometimes resort to suicide.²⁵¹



© Lyalka / flickr.com
Uzbek wedding party



© Laura e Fulvio / flickr.com
Uzbek woman

²⁴⁶ Every Culture, "Culture of Uzbekistan," 2007, <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

²⁴⁷ Botagoz Kassymbekova, "Uzbekistan's Mahalla: A Democratic Tool for Authoritarian Rule?" Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 19 November 2003, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/1659>

²⁴⁸ Joyce Libal, *The Growth and Influence of Islam in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia: Uzbekistan* (Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2005).

²⁴⁹ Women Living Under Muslim Laws, "Uzbekistan: Divorce System Works Against Uzbek Women," 3 November 2006, <http://www.wluml.org/node/3286>

²⁵⁰ United National Development Programme, *Uzbekistan in Figures*, "Crude Divorce Rate," 2008, http://data.statistics.uz/en/data_finder/189

²⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, "Uzbekistan Turns Its Back on Battered Women, Uzbek Women Forced to Remain in Violent Marriages," 7 October 2001, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2001/07/10/uzbeki72.htm>

Funerals

In compliance with Islamic tradition, Uzbeks bury their dead within 24 hours of death when possible. The dead are buried in above-ground tombs. The traditional mourning period is 40 days. A special feast is held to commemorate the first year anniversary of the death.²⁵²



© upyemoz / flickr.com
Funeral procession

Family Celebrations

Traditional rituals punctuate family life. Each ritual, known as a *toi*, celebrates a life transition. Some examples of these rituals are the birth or wooden crib celebration (*beshik toi*), circumcision (*sunnat toi*), engagement (*fatikha toi*), and weddings (*nikoh toi*).²⁵³ Almost without exception each celebration is preceded by great planning and preparation. Men and women wear holiday costumes. Men wear *chapan* or robes, with skullcaps and boots made of thin leather. Women wear scarves, robes, and *sharovars*, wide slacks that narrow in the bottom.²⁵⁴ Festive foods and sweets are prepared with *plov*. As the ceremonies unfold, they are accompanied by song and dance and often spill over into a second, or (in the case of weddings) a third day. Visitors, although strangers to the *mahalla*, are welcome to these celebrations.²⁵⁵



© Nick Corble
Bukhara dancer

Names

Muslims in Uzbekistan are free to name their children according to Sunni practice. This means selecting a first name that commemorates an Islamic hero or includes an amalgam of *abd* (servant of) plus one of the 99 divine Quranic attributes, such as Abd-el-Jelil (Servant of the Exalted). A long list of Quranic and genteel names for girls exists as well. Children carry their patronymic name (father's name) as a middle or second name. Family names remain unchanged, and women take their husband's surname.^{256, 257}



© Night Eulen
Children, Bukhara

²⁵² Everyculture.com, "Uzbekistan," 2011, <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uzbekistan.html>

²⁵³ Asia Travel, "Uzbek Customs and Traditions," 2011, <http://www.asia-travel.uz/en/uzbekistan/customs-and-traditions/>

²⁵⁴ UZINTOUR, "Uzbek Customs" 2007, http://www.uzintour.uz/en/about_uzbekistan/uzbek_customs/

²⁵⁵ Dilnoza Kurbanova, "Rich Traditions Cement Family and Community Ties in Uzbekistan," UNESCO, Spring 2006, http://apceiu.org/bbs/files/pdf/2006/sangsaeng/060529_ss_vol15_p46-47.pdf

²⁵⁶ Guzal Fayzieva, "Mystery of Uzbek Names," Uzbekistan Today, 25 September 2009, http://www.ut.uz/eng/kaleidoscope/mystery_of_uzbek_names.mgr

Chapter 6: Assessment

1. The character of the Uzbek family as a social unit has changed somewhat over 150 years of foreign rule.

True

Uzbeks retained their clan structure, or extended family structure, under czarist domination. Under Soviet rule, however, clans were required to forego large, hereditary landholdings in favor of collective farms.

2. Polygamy was outlawed by the Soviets.

True

Polygamy has been illegal since Soviet times. However, there are some indications that the practice is increasing, especially in rural areas.

3. The state guarantees swift divorce procedures for women seeking to end their marriages.

False

The constitution gives men and women equal rights, but in matters of divorce the state impedes the process for women. Civil courts routinely delay divorce proceedings and frequently require a certificate of reconciliation from the local *mahalla*.

4. Children are given their father's name as a middle or second name.

True

Children carry their patronymic name (father's name) as a middle or second name. Family names remain unchanged, and women take on their husband's surname.

5. *Toi* are traditional rituals that celebrate different events in a person's life.

True

Traditional rituals known as *toi* punctuate family life and celebrate life transitions.

²⁵⁷Guzal Fayzieva, "Mystery of Uzbek Names," Uzbekistan Today, 25 September 2009, http://www.ut.uz/eng/kaleidoscope/mystery_of_uzbek_names.mgr

FINAL ASSESSMENT

1. Each of the country's twelve provinces is governed by a *hokim*.
True / False
2. The energy production sector in Uzbekistan has been slow to develop.
True / False
3. Successful economic reform has included shifting production away from cotton cultivation.
True / False
4. Religious activities of all faiths are strictly regulated by the government.
True / False
5. Approximately 88% of the population of Uzbekistan adheres to the Shi'a branch of Islam.
True / False
6. Men and women pray in a communal room when visiting a mosque.
True / False
7. The Uzbek government limits the number of pilgrims permitted to travel abroad for the Hajj pilgrimage.
True / False
8. Roughly one-third of the Uzbek population engages in agricultural activities.
True / False
9. The Western habit of maintaining eye contact may be considered rude in Uzbekistan.
True / False
10. If a man offers his wrist in place of a handshake, it is a sign that he is from neighboring Kazakhstan.
True / False
11. Environmental pollution is the chief factor negatively affecting the health of the population.
True / False
12. Free public education is credited for the high literacy rate in Uzbekistan.
True / False
13. Although rental cars are available in Uzbekistan, one must also hire a driver.
True / False

14. Uzbekistan is the world's largest cotton producer.
True / False

15. The *kolkhoz* system, established by the Soviets, is still operational in Uzbekistan.
True / False

16. Uzbekistan has enthusiastically participated in international forums for the limitation and eradication of landmines.
True / False

17. At checkpoints, all individuals age 16 and older must present a national identity card or valid visa.
True / False

18. Uzbek society is patriarchal.
True / False

19. Uzbek wedding celebrations sometimes last several days.
True / False

20. The nuclear family has always been the center of the Uzbek family life.
True / False

21. The Uzbeks were traditionally a nomadic people.
True / False

22. Uzbek food is traditionally very spicy.
True / False

23. All medical care in Uzbekistan is free of charge.
True / False

24. Contaminated drinking water is a major cause of health problems.
True / False

25. Agricultural lands may be bought and sold by their peasant owners.
True / False

26. Families often raise gardens in courtyards around their homes.
True / False

27. Both elderly men and women are highly respected in Uzbekistan.

True / False

28. Few women work outside of the home in Uzbekistan.

True / False

29. Cotton accounts for the largest percentage of all foreign exchange earnings.

True / False

30. There have been pressures on the people not to perform the daily Islamic prayers during work hours.

True / False

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