

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan is located in the heart of the Eurasian continent. Its territory occupies 2, 724, 900 square kilometers (1,049,150 square miles). It is the CIS' second and world's ninth largest country. The Kazakhstan territory is larger than the twelve countries of the European Union! Kazakhstan borders with China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Russia. The total length of the borderline is 12,187km.

**Capital:** Astana (since December 10, 1997)

**Language:** The Kazakh language is adopted as the state one. Russian is also widely used and adopted as an international language of communication.

**Currency:** Kazakh currency is tenge (KZT)

**Religion:** The Republic of Kazakhstan is a multinational state, inhabited by more than 120 nationalities. The main religion is Islam, but the Kazakhs manifest tolerance towards other religions of the peoples living in their territory, such as Christianity, Judaism, etc. The country has built many mosques and churches in recent years.

## KAZAKHSTAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

Kazakhstan is a unique region in the world because of its history, geographical position, and size. Being the world's 9th largest country and located in the centre of Eurasia, it is also the largest landlocked country in the world. Diverse offers in Kazakhstan's travel and tourism industry include authentic cultural tourism; nature-based activities, including ecotourism and birdwatching in national parks and protected areas; skiing or trekking in the mountains; water sports, sunbathing, and swimming in the many lakes and rivers of Kazakhstan; and many others.

**Mountains:                      Trekking                      and                      winter                      sports**

A series of mountain ranges of various sizes – such as the Tien Shan, Altay, Ulytau, and Zhygurt – are naturally beautiful and attract tourists from all over the world. The Tien Shan Mountains are the highest among them (with the highest peak being about 7,500 metres, and Almaty, the largest city of Kazakhstan, is located at its base. Thus, tourists interested in trekking and winter sports can easily access marvelous landscapes directly from the city of Almaty.

A unique sport complex Medeu, with a skating rink popular among tourists, was built in the 1950s, at 1,691 metres (5,548 feet) above sea level. Another major winter sport attraction of Kazakhstan is Shymbulak (Chimbulak) ski resort, also located not far from Almaty. Snow can be found there from November till May; however, sunny weather is also registered there more than three hundred days a year.

**Lakes                      and                      rivers:                      water                      sports,                      sunbathing                      and                      health                      resorts**

Kazakhstan is more than its steppes and mountains; it is also a country of rivers and lakes. A lake among the steppes can be like an oasis among empty deserts.

Kazakhstan's coastline along the largest lake in the world, the Caspian Sea, is perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and fishing. The largest number of reservoirs is concentrated in the southeast part of the country, in the region symbolically named Zhetysu – “Seven Rivers”. Almost all the rivers of Zhetysu belong to the basin of Lake Balkhash, which is also a popular tourist destination for its health centres and recreation camps. Besides health resorts, the lakes offer serene boating and sailing, and extreme tourists can find rafting opportunities in mountain rivers.

**Culture:****ethnotourism**

Kazakhstan's unique culture is a reason why many tourists travel to Kazakhstan. In almost every corner of the republic, a visitor interested in the lives of genuine Kazakh people – their traditions, their rituals, their art, and their culture – will find much of interest. This can include museum complexes, ethno villages depicting the traditional lifestyle of Kazakh people, historical sites of medieval cities, and much more.

For example, tourists are offered to experience traditional lifestyle of Kazakhs, to try national dishes and to interact with the local people in *Shabanbay Bi Village*, situated in Kyzylaray Mountains, Central Kazakhstan. *Zhambyl Zhabayev* museum complex in Almaty region includes a house with a garden, where the poet lived in XIX-XX centuries and a mausoleum. Ethno-memorial complex *Map of Kazakhstan - Atameken*, located in Astana, is the largest ethnographic park in Kazakhstan and a unique outdoor museum. Cities and landscapes of the country, as well as mini copies of main attractions and historical sites can be found on the map.