The name Kazakh is derived from an ancient Turkic word mean “independent, a free spirt.” –stan means “Land or “place of” so Kazakhstan is “land of the Kazakhs.”

Kazakhstan is located in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It isthe 9th largest country in the world (2x Alaska) and the largest landlocked country. This means: that a country is entirely enclosed by land, or whose coastlines lie on closed seas. In Kazakhstan’s case it has a significant border on the Caspian Sea.

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed body of water in the world. More than 130 rivers flow into the Caspian.

The territory of modern-day Kazakhstan has been inhabited by nomadic tribes; by the mid-19th century all of Kazakhstan was part of the Russian Empire. And later became a republic part of the former Soviet Union. It became an independent country on December 16, 1991 and was the last Soviet republic to do so.

Kazakhstan is located on what was known as the “silk road” or the “silk routes” which are ancient trade routes people would follow to trade their goods. Silk, from China was one of the major items that was traded along with spices, jewels, glass, even rhubarb.

Important paths for exchange: technological, cultural and commercial.

This steppe is the region of Kazakhstan that was on the silk road. The steppe is treeless grassland—it can be semi-arid or covered with grass and shrubs. It is this region where archaeologists believe that humans first domesticated the horse. .The term is also used to denote the [climate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate) encountered in regions too dry to support a [forest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest), but not dry enough to be a desert. The Kazakh Steppe lies at the southern end of the [Ural Mountains](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ural_Mountains), the traditional dividing line between [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) and [Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia).

A **yurt** (**üi** or **kiz üi** in Kazakh, **ger** in Mongolian) is a portable, [felt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felt)-covered, wood [lattice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latticework)-framed dwelling structure traditionally used by Turkic and Mongolian [nomads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nomad) in the [steppes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steppe) of [Central Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia). A yurt is more home-like than a tent in shape and build, with thicker walls.

In addition to the largest enclosed body of water in the world (the Caspian Sea). Kazakhstan is home to another large sea. It is the Aral Sea and it has been steadily shrinking. Formerly one of the four [largest lakes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Largest_lakes) in the world with an area of 68,000 square kilometres (26,300 sq mi), the Aral Sea has been steadily shrinking since the 1960s after the rivers that fed it were diverted by [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) irrigation projects. By 2007 it had declined to 10% of its original size, splitting into four lakes

When you look at the photos of the sea, you see all sorts of photos of old rusting ships where the sea once was.

**Charyn Canyon** is an 80 km canyon in [Kazakhstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan) on the [Charyn River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charyn_River), 200 km east of [Almaty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almaty), close to the Chinese border. It is part of the [Charyn National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Charyn_National_Park&action=edit&redlink=1), which is established 23 February 2004 and located within the territory of the Uyghur and Kegen Districts of the [Almaty Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almaty_Province).

It stretches 154 kilometres (96 mi) along the [Charyn River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charyn_River) in the northern [Tien Shan mountain range](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tien_Shan_Mountains). In parts, it attains a depth of 150 to 300 metres (490–980 ft).

One part of it is known as *Valley of Castles* for its unusual rock formations. The width of it ranges from 20 to 80 metres (66–260 ft) and the length is 2 kilometres (1.2 mi).

Tien Shan Mountains: some of the mountains are snow covered year round. Highest Point:

Khan Tangiri Shyngy (Pik Khan-Tengri) 6,995 m (22,949 ft) Mt. Rainer is 11,138 feet.

The Golden Steppe Eagle is the bird that is on the flag of Kazakhstan.

Almaty:

is the former capital and still largest city in [Kazakhstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan), with a population of 1,348,500 (as of 1 September 2008).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almaty#cite_note-2) This represents 9% of the population of the country. It was the capital of the [Kazakh SSR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakh_SSR) and its successor Kazakhstan from 1929 to 1997. Despite losing its status as the capital to [Astana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astana) in 1997, Almaty remains the major commercial center of Kazakhstan. It is located in southern Kazakhstan, near the border with [Kyrgyzstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrgyzstan).

The name "Almaty" derives from the [Kazakh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakh_language) word for 'apple' (алма), and thus is often translated as "full of apples;" *alma* is also 'apple' in other Turkic languages, as well as in [Hungarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_language).

The region is thought to be the ancestral home of the apple, and the wild [*Malus sieversii*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malus_sieversii) is considered a likely candidate for the ancestor of the modern domestic apple.

Astana:

Bayterek is the most famous landmark in Astana. The legend behind this tower as a symbol is that it represents a [poplar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poplar) tree, where the magic bird Samuruk laid its egg. In the sphere on the top of Bayterek there is an imprint of president [Nursultan Nazarbayev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nursultan_Nazarbayev)'s hand.

Pyramid of Peace

The building is conceived as a global center for religious understanding, the renunciation of violence and the promotion of faith and human equality. The Pyramid of Peace expresses the spirit of Kazakhstan, where cultures, traditions and representatives of various nationalities coexist in peace, harmony and accord

Language:

Kazakh is the state language and Russian is also officially used.

Kazakh is a Turkic language. 10 million people speak it.

Kazakh is written in the [Cyrillic alphabet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrillic_alphabet) in Kazakhstan and Mongolia, while the more than one million Kazakh-speakers in China use an [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_alphabet)-derived script similar to that used to write [Uyghur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uyghur_language). But it also can be written with Latin letters.

Exports:

Oil, wheat, textile, livestock and it is the worlds leading exporter of uranium.

Soccer is the most popular sport in Kazakhstan.

Money:

The name of the currency is tenge. The origins of this word is from Turkic languages means scale. The National emblem is on the back of the colorful currency.

One historic fact about Kazakhstan is that is was the location of the Soviet Space Program. The Russian Federation still leases the Baikonur Cosmodrome. It was is the world’s first and largest operational space launch facility.

From Baikonur:

In 1957, Sputnik 1 was launched.

In 1961, the first manned spacecraft in human history was launched from on the launch pads, which is know known as Gagarin’s Start. The first manned spacecraft, Vostok 1 with Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.

And the first woman to go to space, Valentina Tereshkova launched from Baikonur.

Flag:

A gold sun with 32 rays above a soaring golden steppe eagle on a sky blue background. The “koshkar-muiz” or horns of the ram is on the side.

The blue is of religious significance to the Turkic peoples and it represents the enless sky as well as water. The sun in a source of life and energy and exemplifies wealth and plenitude. The eagle has appears of flags for centuries and represents freedom, power and flight to the future.

Embelem:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The national emblem depicts a *shanyrak* (the top part of a circular, tent-like home called a *yurt*) against a blue background, with the tent supports radiating outwards like the rays of the sun. Two winged horses are situated on the left and the right. *Kazakhstan* is inscribed across the bottom of the emblem. |  |  |