

UZBEKISTAN'S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION. POPULATION.CLIMATE

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Annotation: this article examines Uzbekistan's geographical position, population, and climate, highlighting their influence on the country's social, economic, and environmental development. Located in Central Asia, Uzbekistan shares borders with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, making it a key hub for regional trade and cultural exchange. The country has a population of over 36 million people, with diverse ethnic groups contributing to its rich cultural heritage and social dynamics. Uzbekistan's climate is largely continental, characterized by hot, dry summers and cold winters, with variations across different regions. This climate impacts agriculture, water resources, and living conditions, shaping the livelihoods of its population. The passage also explores how population distribution and climate influence urban planning, economic activities, and resource management in the country. Despite challenges such as water scarcity and regional climate variations, Uzbekistan's strategic location, demographic diversity, and climate patterns play a central role in its national development and regional significance.

Key words: Uzbekistan, Central Asia, geography, population, climate, continental climate, natural resources, urban planning, demographic diversity, regional development.

Introduction

Uzbekistan, located in the heart of Central Asia, holds a strategic position that has shaped its historical, economic, and cultural development. Bordered by Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, the country serves as a crucial hub for regional trade and cultural exchange. With a population of over 36 million people, Uzbekistan is home to diverse ethnic groups that contribute to its rich heritage and vibrant social structure. The country's largely continental climate, featuring hot summers and cold winters, influences agriculture, water resources, and daily life, while also impacting urban planning and economic activities. Understanding Uzbekistan's geographical location, population dynamics, and climatic conditions is essential for appreciating its national development and regional significance.

Geographical position of Uzbekistan

[Uzbekistan](#) is a country in [Central Asia](#), located north of [Turkmenistan](#) and [Afghanistan](#). With an area of approximately 448,900 square kilometers, Uzbekistan stretches 1,425 km (885 mi) from west to east and 930 km (580 mi) from north to south. It borders Turkmenistan to the southwest, [Kazakhstan](#) to the north and [Tajikistan](#) and [Kyrgyzstan](#) to the south and east. Uzbekistan also has [four small exclaves](#) in Kyrgyzstan.

Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian state to border all of the other four.^[1] Uzbekistan also shares a short border with [Afghanistan](#) to the south.^[1] As the [Caspian Sea](#) is an inland sea with no direct link to the oceans, Uzbekistan is one of only two "doubly [landlocked](#)" countries—countries completely surrounded by other landlocked countries. The other is [Liechtenstein](#). Uzbekistan's physical landscape is highly diverse, ranging from extensive flat desert areas that make up nearly 80% of the country to mountain peaks in the east reaching around 4,500 meters (14,800 ft) above sea level. The southeastern region features the foothills of the Tian Shan mountains, which rise higher in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and serve as a natural boundary between Central Asia and China. The northern lowlands are dominated by the Qizilqum Desert ("Red Sand"), which Uzbekistan shares with southern Kazakhstan. The most fertile region is the Fergana Valley, covering about 21,440 square kilometers (8,280 sq mi), located east of the Qizilqum Desert and encircled by mountains on three sides. The Syr Darya River marks the western edge of the valley, flowing from southern Kazakhstan through northeastern Uzbekistan into the Qizilqum. Despite receiving only 100 to 300 millimeters (3.9–11.8 in) of rainfall annually, the valley retains fertile land, with deserts appearing only in limited areas. Water resources in Uzbekistan are unevenly distributed and generally scarce. The vast plains, covering two-thirds of the country, have few lakes and limited water availability. The two major rivers, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, originate in the mountains of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and are crucial for irrigation. Several artificial canals have been constructed to expand arable land, particularly in the Fergana Valley. During the Soviet era, a resource-sharing system existed in which Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan provided summer water to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, while receiving oil and gas in winter, but this system collapsed after the USSR, and a new plan has yet to be established. If unresolved, this situation could lead to regional instability. Additionally, Sarygamish Lake lies on the border with Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan is also seismically active, with earthquakes affecting large parts of the country. The capital, Tashkent, was largely destroyed by a major earthquake in 1966, and mountain regions remain particularly prone to seismic activity, posing ongoing risks to settlements and infrastructure.

Population

Uzbekistan is the most populous country in Central Asia, with an estimated population of 36.8 million as of January 2024, representing nearly half of the region's total population. The country has a very young population, with 30.1% under the age of 14. Ethnically, Uzbeks form the majority at 84.4%, while other groups include Tajiks (4.8%), Kazakhs (3%), Karakalpaks (2.5%), Russians (2.1%), and Tatars (1.5%). Additionally, there is an ethnic Korean community, relocated from the Soviet Far East in 1937–1938, as well as small Armenian communities mainly in Tashkent and Samarkand. Religiously, approximately 94% of the population are Muslims (predominantly Sunni), 3% follow Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and the remaining 3% adhere to other faiths, including small groups of Korean Christians, Buddhists, Baha'is, and others. Historically, Bukharan Jews have lived in Uzbekistan for thousands of years, but following the collapse of the Soviet Union, most emigrated to the United States or Israel, leaving around 5,000 in the country today. Traditionally, much of the population was involved in cotton farming on large collective farms during the Soviet era. While Uzbekistan remains largely rural and agriculturally dependent, farm structures have shifted from collective to individual holdings since 1990.

Climate

Uzbekistan's climate is primarily continental, with some areas in the east displaying characteristics of Mediterranean and humid continental climates. Most of the country, however, particularly the western and central regions, falls under the cold desert (Köppen BWk) or cold steppe (BSk) classifications. This results in extremely hot summers and cold winters, with summer temperatures often exceeding 40 °C (104 °F) and winter temperatures averaging between -1°C (30 °F) and -3°C (27 °F), occasionally dropping as low as -40°C (-40 °F) in mountainous areas.

Precipitation is limited, ranging from 100 to 200 millimeters (3.9–7.9 in) annually, and occurs mainly during winter and spring. The summer months from June to September are particularly dry, which restricts vegetation growth and increases the risk of droughts. The climate significantly influences agriculture, water resource management, and urban planning, as most of the country relies on irrigation for farming.

Uzbekistan also experiences regional climate variations due to its diverse topography. Mountainous areas in the east and southeast, such as the Tian Shan foothills, receive more rainfall and have cooler temperatures, while the lowlands and desert regions in the west and center experience extreme heat, aridity, and strong seasonal winds. These climatic conditions play a central role in shaping the livelihoods of the population, agricultural cycles, and water management policies, particularly regarding the use of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers for irrigation.

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