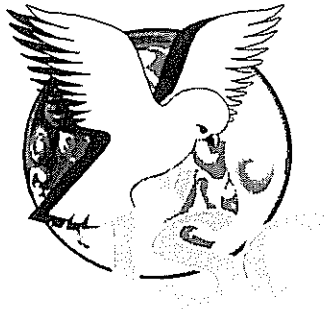


ALBANIA

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

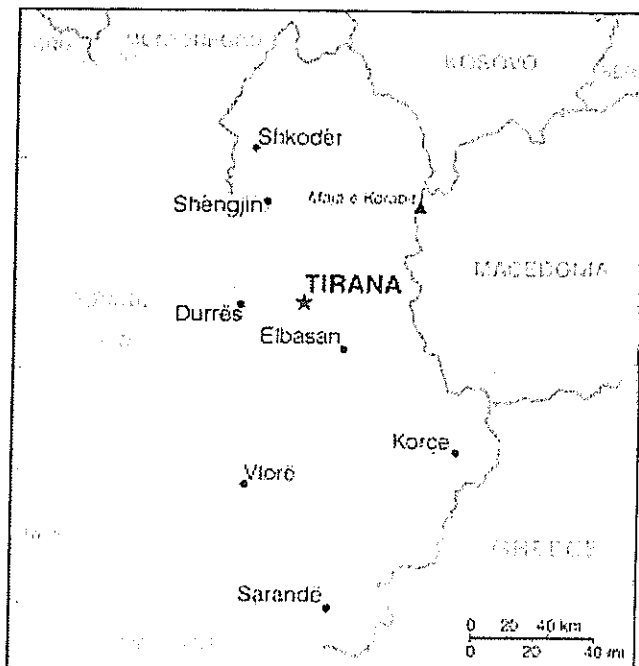
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ALBANIA

Map:



www.cia.gov

Capital: Tirana (Tirane)

Time Difference: 6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 3,639,453 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Albanian

Type of Government: Emerging democracy

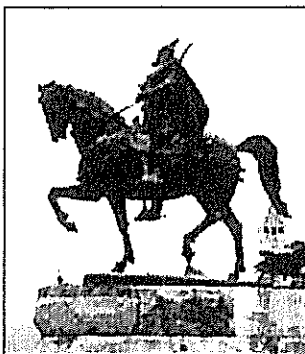
Administrative Divisions: 12 counties

Total Area: 28,748 sq km (11,100 sq mi)

Area: Slightly smaller than Maryland

HISTORY

The Illyrians settled in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula approximately 1000 BC. The Visigoths and Huns passed through the area, but the Slavs were the next to settle in 6 AD. As different empires in Europe increased in power, they were able to rule over the Balkan region.



news.bbc.co.uk

Skanderbeg, the son of an Albanian princely family, challenged the Ottoman Empire's early rule in the region. After his capture by the Turks, they took him to Istanbul to get training as a Muslim warrior. While fighting for the empire in the Balkans, he switched allegiance and proclaimed himself a Christian. After uniting Albanians, he was able to fight Turkish armies from 1443 until 1467. It was not until Skanderbeg's death in 1468 that the Ottoman Empire was successful in ruling over the region for the next four centuries. During this rule, the Albanian people fully assimilated into the culture and lifestyle of the Turks.

A meeting in Bitolj, Macedonia in 1909 assisted in prompting Albanian nationalism. The first outcome of the meeting was the adoption of a standard way of writing, and the spelling of the Albanian language in Roman letters. The second outcome was the appointment of a committee of national union, which was the first step in gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Three years later, fighting erupted between the Albanian and Turkish armies, resulting in the Albanian occupation of the Macedonian city of Skopje. This event was followed by the Balkan War that began in October 1912 with Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria fighting against Turkey. On November 28, 1912, Albanians issued the Vlore Proclamation stating its independence from the Ottoman Empire. Albania's borders were finally established in 1913.

Italy occupied Albania from 1939 to 1943 during the Second World War, and Germany took over in 1943 until the end of the war. Communist party leader Enver Hoxha then took control of the country for the next 40 years until his death in 1985. During his reign, the populace was subjected to purges, shortages, repression of civil and political rights, a total ban on religious observance, and an increase in isolation from the rest of the world. Furthermore, Stalinist philosophy was imposed and the country withdrew from the Warsaw Pact in 1968.

After the fall of Communism in 1991, the Albanian Government sought to establish closer relations with the West. The next year saw Sali Berisha of the Democratic Party become the first democratically elected president of Albania. Over the next several years, President Berisha initiated economic and democratic reforms; however, the reforms were not successful due to a political gridlock. Corrupt investment companies were simultaneously conducting pyramid schemes that eventually led to armed revolts and anarchy in 1997 after thousands of Albanians were left bankrupt.

After the restoration of order by a United Nations Multinational Protection Force and the resignation of President Berisha, Rexhep Meidani was elected as president. A new constitution was enacted in 1998. Fatos Nano, Chairman of the Socialist Party, later became prime minister in 2002. Furthermore, on July 24, 2002, Alfred Moisiu became president after an agreement between the various parties. This new change enabled Albania to improve its economic and political structures and relationships with other countries.

Political infighting began during the summer of 2003, thus affecting the advancement of the economic and political reforms. On September 11, 2005, Sali Berisha returned to power as Prime Minister. His government pledged to make the fight against corruption and organized crime the main priority. Disturbances during the local elections and parliamentary by-elections in 2007 demonstrated the need to reform the electoral system. Bamir Topi, a former agriculture minister, became president on July 20, 2007 after elections within Parliament. He is currently serving a five-year term of office.

GEOGRAPHY

Albania is roughly 210 miles long and 95 miles wide. It borders Montenegro to the northwest, Kosovo to the northeast, Macedonia to the east, and Greece to the southeast and south. The Adriatic and Ionian seas bind Albania's 225-mile long coastline. Mountains and hills comprise three-quarters of Albania, while coastal and alluvial lowlands mark the rest of the land. The North Albanian Alps are heavily forested and sparsely populated. Its elevation is slightly less than 8,900 feet.



www.summitpost.org

The central mountain region has less rugged terrain, and a denser population. Vegetation in the mountainous southern region is either barren or covered with Mediterranean shrubs, oaks and pines. The low, fertile plains of western Albania are the most densely populated regions. Albania economically relies on the fertile plains to output agricultural and industrial products.

Originating from Kosovo, Drin is the longest river spanning a length of approximately 175 miles. Other major rivers that drain into the central part of the western plains are the Serman, Shkumbin and Vjose. Additionally, there are many lakes including Lake Scutari in the northwest and Lakes Ohrid and Prespa along the eastern border with Macedonia.

CLIMATE

Summers in Albania are warm and dry, while winters are mild and wet. Compared to the rest of the country, the western area has temperatures that are more moderate due to warm maritime air from the Adriatic and Ionian seas. In July, cities along the southern coast experience daily average temperatures in the mid-70s °F, while January has temperatures as low as 40 °F. In the eastern area, the summers are mild and winters are cold due to continental air. Therefore, daily average temperatures in July are in the mid-70s °F and in the lower 30s °F in January.

Although the average annual rainfall is plentiful, it occurs unevenly across the country. Forty percent of annual precipitation falls during winter. The North Albanian Alps can experience more than 100 inches of average annual precipitation, while the area along most of the eastern border receives less than 30 inches. Unlike the rest of the country, droughts are common during the summer in the southwest.

EDUCATION

Historically, the education system has been centralized and controlled; however, in the recent past, the system has become libertarian. The Ministry of Education is responsible to create the national educational curriculum and programs. Recently, local governments have received additional power to shape school governance issues. In the year 2004, there were 4,700 public educational institutions with approximately 560,000 students at the elementary level, 90,000 at the secondary level and 35,000 at the tertiary level. Albania has also recently seen the introduction of private education.

Children begin their elementary education at the age of six. For elementary and secondary levels, the school year begins in September and ends in the middle of June. At the higher education level, the school year is comprised of two 15-week long semesters that last from October to May.

TRADITIONS

The Communist regime, which was prevalent in years after World War II, made a significant impact on Albanian culture and traditions through the censorship of the press, publications and performing arts. It was not until the fall of Communism did each successive government try to revitalize the country's rich folk life.

Traditionally, Albanians are recognized for their hospitality. The people base their tradition on a set of customs known as *kanun* (code), which Prince Leke Dukagjin developed in the 15th century. These laws encompass all societal relationships. Albania has a long literary tradition, and the most famous contemporary writer is Ismael Kadare. Traditional arts include fine embroidery, lace making, and woodworking. Traditional singers have the ability to sing music and recite long stories, but this heritage is slowly becoming extinct. Folk music, heavily influenced by Turkish and Persian cultures, is regularly featured at festivals in numerous towns across the country. The iso-polyphony folk tradition was revived in the early 21st century and is practiced at social events.

Most of the cuisine consists of meat and seafood. Popular dishes include roasts, beef loin, kabobs and meatballs. Trout, although rare, and carp are the preferred seafood dishes for many Albanians. A specialty of Tirana is the Fergese Tirana, which is made of meat, pepper, eggs and tomatoes. In the south, a common entrée is sheep intestine broiled on a spit. Pudding made from figs and sheep's milk is a common dessert.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

As descendants of the Illyrians, Albanians commonly refer to themselves as the “sons of eagles.” Separated by rugged terrain and distinguished by a complicated history, Albanians have lived in relative isolation and obscurity. The GEGs in the north and the Tosks in the south are the two main Albanian subgroups. Non-Albanians only comprise one-tenth of the country’s total population. The GEGs controlled much of Albanian politics before World War II. Throughout history, GEGs have had an independent spirit and fighting capabilities, and challenge outside authority. On the other hand, the Tosks were heavily influenced by foreign powers.

The Albanian language, called *shqip* or *shqipe*, is the only surviving language from the extinct Illyrian tongue. From centuries of foreign rule, the Albanian vocabulary has adopted words from the Latin, Greek, Turkish, Italian, and Slavic tongues. The two main dialects are GEG and Tosk spoken along the Shkumbin River. Although the dialects vary, Albanians throughout the country can understand each other.

Before 1908, Albanians utilized various alphabets to write publications. Nevertheless, during that year, a writing system was adopted based on the Roman alphabet. Subsequent decades witnessed a time when Albanians endeavored to unify their language based on the GEG dialect of the central Elbasan region. During this period, all printed material was published in the Tosk dialect. It was not until 1972 that a Congress of Orthography meeting in Tirana successfully unified their language based on the Tosk dialect.

The roles of men and women vary in Albanian culture. Women are less represented in public life than men are. Albania has traditionally been a patriarchal society, and this system has been maintained until the present day. In the countryside, the parents of the groom, assisted by a matchmaker, normally arrange marriage. A person who remains unmarried is considered to be unfortunate. As a tradition, weddings are celebrated during a full moon to ensure that the couple will have many children. The birth of sons has a greater importance in the society than the birth of a daughter.

RELIGION

A majority of Albanians practice Islam as a religion, regardless of the Communist efforts to make an atheistic, secular state. In 1967, the Communists closed 2,100 mosques, churches, monasteries and other places of worship. The people however were not deterred from privately practicing their own religions. Government restrictions on freedom of religion ended in 1990 and in 1991. The government allowed churches and mosques to open. Presently, Albania is a self-proclaimed secular state.

Residing mainly in central Albania, the Muslim population as a percentage of the total population is approximately between 65 and 70 percent. Albania is considered the world center of the Bektashi School (Shi’a Sufism). Comprising 20 percent of the total population, members of the Albanian Orthodox reside primarily in the south. Small Protestant groups do exist, and along with the Roman Catholic population, they reside primarily in the north.

HOLIDAYS



albca.com

Ramadan, celebrated in January, is one of the many Islamic holidays that Muslim Albanians observe. Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter, and other Albanians do celebrate traditional religious pagan holidays and folklore festivals. One holiday *Dita e Veres* (Spring Day), is celebrated in mid-March and originates from an ancient pagan holiday. The National Festival of Folklore is celebrated in the historic town of Gjirokaster and is one of the largest folkloric festivals in Albania.

Numerous agricultural fairs and religious festivals take place throughout the year. Highlighted events at these fairs include competitions that involve highly skilled sports. Albanians also celebrate their Independence Day on November 28.

ECONOMY

Albania has remained among the poorest countries in Europe. The Bank of Albania reported in 2008 that the per capita income was \$3,500. The adoption of a market-oriented system from a centrally planned economy proved to be difficult. The pyramid schemes of the 1990s impeded the transition to the new system, and the country is still recovering from the bankruptcy that resulted from the schemes.

The CIA World Factbook reports that the official unemployment rate, as of 2008 estimates, is 12.5 percent. However, it notes that the rate might be over 30 percent because a large number of Albanians practice near-subsistence farming. These farmers do not have modern equipment, property rights are unclear, and their plots of land are small. The agricultural sector employs close to 60 percent of the country's entire workforce, and the construction and service industries are presently experiencing growth in their sector. The average annual growth rate between the years 2003 and 2007 was 5.5 percent.

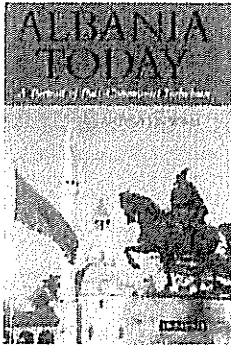
Albania maintains a multiregional agreement with certain countries that is based on the Central European Free Trade Agreement model. Trade with other European Union member countries, primarily Italy and Greece, accounts for nearly 68 percent. However, Albania is currently experiencing a significant trade deficit, with imports in 2007 being \$4.15 billion while exports were \$1 billion. Annual remittances, mainly from Albanians living in Greece and Italy, accounts for 15 percent of GDP and assists in compensating for the large trade deficit.

Energy and transportation infrastructure is inefficient. Most of the country experiences constant power outages, and the transportation of goods is expensive because of poor road conditions. Additionally, the country has a limited railway system and one international airport.

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SUGGESTED READING



Albania Today: A Portrait of Post-Communist Turbulence

By: Clarissa de Waal

Publisher: I. B. Tauris & Company, 2005

Waal has been able to observe the daily living of Albanians since 1992. This book looks at how different families of varied backgrounds adjusted to life after the fall of Communism. The book therefore explores the various intricacies of enacting change in the economic, social, and political arenas. The reader will get a glimpse of the challenges that Albania is facing as it tries to become part of the mainstream in identity, but still holding to some of its past traditions.

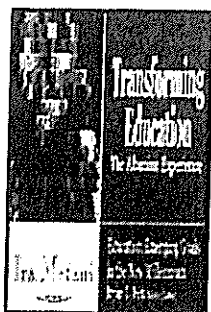


Scanderbeg: From Ottoman Captive to Albanian Hero

By: Harry Hodgkinson

Publisher: I. B. Tauris & Company, 2005

The author of this book, the late Harry Hodgkinson, is a former English naval intelligence officer. This book is the first biography of Scanderbeg to be published in England for more than four hundred years.



Transforming Education (Education: Emerging Goals in a New Millenium): The Albanian Experience

By: Ira Metani

Publisher: Nova Science Publishers, Incorporated, 2002

This book reviews the status of the Albanian education system. Metani accomplishes this by examining the structure of education, education management, financing, teaching methods, teacher qualifications, special education, and the long term strategy for the development of Albanian education.



Gregory's Mediterranean Cuisine: Recipes of Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, Turkey, and Greece

By: Gregory Evangelos Zotos Ph. D.

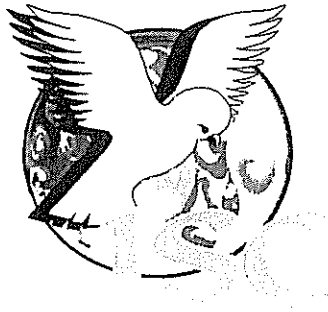
Publisher: Publish America, 2006

Zotos provides the recipes from Albania and the neighboring countries. The book presents both old and new recipes, which also includes old village recipes that are hard to find. The author provides recipes that are simple and easy to make.

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CAMBODIA

Map:



www.cia.gov

Capital: Phnom Penh

Population: 14,494,293 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Khmer

Type of Government: Multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy

Administrative Divisions: 20 provinces 4 municipalities

Total Area: 181,040 sq km (69,900 sq mi)

Area: Slightly larger than Oklahoma

HISTORY

It is believed that the Funan Empire was established in what is now Cambodia early in the 1st century A.D. and ruled Southeast Asia until it was overthrown by the Khmer kingdom of Chenla in the 6th century. By the 12th century, the kingdom expanded into lands known today as Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Malaysia. By the early 14th century, Khmers ruled only a small kingdom and were later reduced to its present size in the 17th century.

Cambodia became a protectorate of France in 1863, and in 1887 became part of the French Indochinese Union. For the next 90 years, Cambodia was under the rule of France. Finally in 1953, King Norodom Sihanouk led Cambodia to independence.

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge seized control of the capital Phnom Penh, and renamed the country the Democratic Kampuchea. Cities were evacuated and the people in the urban areas were forced to move to rural areas and work in agriculture. Over the next four years, the Khmer Rouge regime destroyed governmental, educational and religious institutions, and killed an estimated two millions Cambodians.

In 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and forced the Khmer Rouge to flee to the Thai border. The Vietnamese installed a less repressive government and renamed the country the People's Republic of Kampuchea in 1979. They removed their troops in 1989, and the country was renamed the State of Cambodia. A peace treaty was signed by the three rebel groups, Khmer Rouge, Hun Sen's Vietnamese-supported government, and Prince Sihanouk's faction, on October 23, 1991 and they created a coalition government. In 1993, the country was finally renamed to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

GEOGRAPHY

Cambodia is a small country located in Southeast Asia and bordered by Laos in the north, Thailand in the northwest, and Vietnam in the east. With an area of 181,035 sq km (69,898 sq mi), the country consists of low-lying alluvial plains in the center and several mountainous regions forming a semicircle around the country. In the west are the Cardamon Mountains, in the southwest lie the Elephant Mountains, and in the north is the Dankret Mountain Range. Reaching a height of 1,813 meters, Phnom Aural is Cambodia's highest mountain. Cambodia lies within the tropics and its southernmost points more than 10 degrees above the Equator.



www.stircrazyrestaurant.com

Cambodia is home to the longest river in Southeast Asia and the tenth largest in the world, the Mekong River. It is also home to the largest lake in Southeast Asia, the Tonle Sap. This lake is one of the richest sources of freshwater fish in the world.

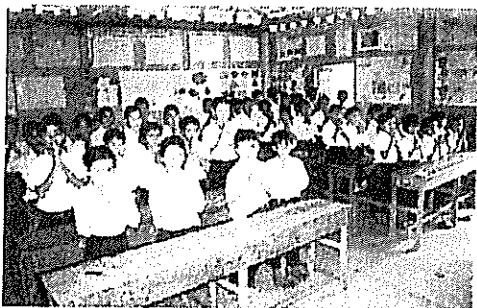
CLIMATE

Like many other countries in Southeast Asia, Cambodia climate is governed by the monsoons, which divide the climate into two distinct seasons. The Southwest Monsoon brings the rainy season from mid-May to early October, and the Northeast Monsoon brings the dry season from November to mid-March. Temperatures are high throughout the year, averaging between 28°C (82°F) in the coldest month of January and 35°C (95°F) in April, the hottest month.

The annual precipitation varies throughout the country, ranging from 55 inches in the central lowland region to about 200 inches on the seaward slopes of the southwestern highlands. The relative humidity is high at night throughout the year, usually exceeding 90 percent. During the daytime, humidity averages 50 percent in the dry season, and about 60 percent in the rainy season.

EDUCATION

Traditional education in Cambodia was taught by Buddhist monks in temples. The educational system was heavily focused on Buddhist doctrine and history. Memorizing Buddhist chants was common in schools. The majority of the student population was male, as girls were not allowed into the temples.



www.usaid.gov

In 1917 the Law on Education passed by the French colonial government introduced a basic primary and secondary education system. However, its main function was to train civil servants for colonial service throughout French Indochina. After independence from France, Cambodia established a universal education system.

The constitution of Cambodia guaranteed the universal right to basic quality education for the child's first nine years. Curriculum consisted of arithmetic, history, ethics, civics, drafting, geography, hygiene, language, science, physical education and manual work. In 2006, nearly all children were enrolled in primary education. Secondary education was more limited with only 25 percent of school age students enrolled. A total of 5.3 percent of university age students were enrolled in seven of the higher learning institutions in the country. It is estimated that only 76 percent of the adult population is literate.

Education in Cambodia continues to face many challenges. Teachers lack morale due to their inadequate salaries and lack of suitable teaching materials. Students face inadequate facilities, large classroom size, and high costs for their families. Attendance at schools in rural areas continued to be limited due to the fact that children often time stay home to help their families in the field.

TRADITIONS

Unlike Westerners, Cambodians do not celebrate birthdays. It is not unusual for people to know only the season of their birth rather than the exact date. On the other hand, death is highly honored. Rather than being considered the end, it is celebrated as a new beginning. In light of this notion, rituals are performed for dead relatives to comfortably pass on to their new lives. Funerals are an occasion for family gatherings with plenty of food and music. To mourn the loss of their relatives who have passed on, family members express their sorrow by wearing white clothing, the color of mourning, and shaving their heads and eyebrows.

Marriage is an important event in Cambodia. Men usually married between the age of nineteen and twenty-four and women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two. According to tradition, most couples have arranged marriages. The frequency of this practice however has decreased over time. Cambodians observe a season during which weddings are considered preferable. Traditional Cambodian weddings last up to three days. Khmer tradition allows for a man to have more than one wife.



plantstreesflowers.sihanoukville-cambodia.com

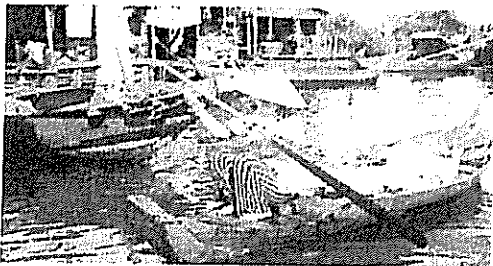
Formal and casual greetings between Cambodians are dependent upon the relationship, hierarchy and age of the people in the conversation. People are addressed with an honorific title, "Lok" for a man and "Lok Srey" for a woman, followed with their first name. A common greeting is "Sok sebai te", which means "How are you?" The traditional greeting involves a bow combined with joined hands raised to the chest level. Shaking hands is not common in Cambodia.

Cambodian main diet consists of rice and soup. Rice is prepared in many different ways and is eaten at every meal. A bowl of soup may have a combination of fish, eggs, vegetables, meat and spices. Vegetables, fruits, seafood and fish are very common in Cambodia. Common utensils are chopsticks, spoons and their fingers, depending on the type of food eaten and family customs.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

According to a July 2009 estimate, the total population of Cambodia is 14 million. The Khmer account for the majority, totaling 90 percent of the population. They are concentrated in the lowland regions surrounding the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap. Other ethnic minority groups include Chinese, Vietnamese, Muslim Cham-Malays, Laotians, and various indigenous peoples.

The Chinese migrated in the 18th and 19th century into Cambodia and became involved in commerce. During the Khmer Rouge regime, many Chinese either evacuated or were killed.



www.twohigs.com

Today, the Chinese population in Cambodia is estimated at 100,000. The Vietnamese inhabit much of southern Cambodia, and reach an estimated 200,000. The Cham-Malays constitute the single largest ethnic minority in the country with about 500,000. They are descendants of the royal kingdom of Champa, based in present-day central Vietnam.

Cambodia's official and most commonly spoken language is Khmer. The writing system is derived from an Indian alphabet that was brought into Cambodia over a thousand years ago. Unlike many Southeast Asian languages, Khmer is not tonal. The language is written from left to right with no spaces between words. Other languages including Vietnamese and dialects of Chinese are spoken by minority groups.

RELIGION

Theravada Buddhism is Cambodia's state religion with over 90 percent of the population as followers. Buddhism originated in India and Nepal during the 6th century, and eventually reached Cambodia in the 13th century.

Buddhist monks and the spiritual centers in which they live are the foundation of Cambodia's Buddhism. Traditionally, each village has a spiritual center with five or more monks. The number of monks depends on the population of the village. A typical temple is an ornately-built walled enclosure with the main entrance facing east.

Generally, minority populations are not Theravada Buddhists. Ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese follow Mahayana Buddhism and Daoism. Many Vietnamese are also members of the Roman Catholic Church or follow religious movements such as Cao Dai. The Cham-Malays are Muslim.

HOLIDAYS

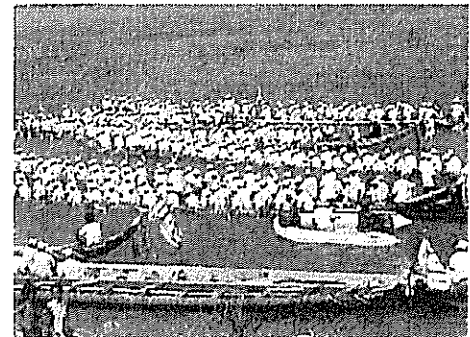
Cambodian celebrates numerous national holidays. Celebration days for the Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben, and the Water and Moon Festival vary depending on the lunar calendar.

Chol Chnam, Khmer New Year, falls in April and is Cambodia's most important holiday. Similar to the Chinese New Year, Cambodians welcome the new zodiac animal. The entire month of April is spent in preparation for the celebration, through cleaning and decorating homes. During this three days celebration, cities are left empty as many people return to spend time with their families.

Pchum Ben is the Festival of the Ancestors and it occurs in September. During this festival, Cambodians remember the spirits of their dead relatives and travel to temples to make offerings. For fifteen days, food, flowers and rice are given to the monks to ensure that the spirits of those in the after life do not haunt the living. It is Khmer's belief that those who do not follow this practice will be cursed by their ancestors.

Bon Om Touk, Water and Moon Festival, occurs in late October or early November to mark the beginning of the fishing season. Cambodian celebrates the reversing of the current in the Tonle Sap River which flows south into the Mekong River. The highlights of this three days festival are the boat races that are held on the Tonle Sap River in front of the Royal Palace.

Other holidays include Victory Over Genocide Day (January 7), Royal Plowing Day (May 23), and National Independence Day (November 9).



www.2camels.com

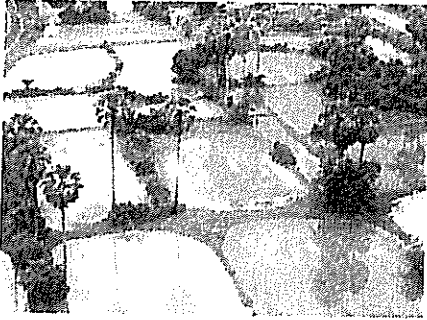
ECONOMY

Cambodia is one of the world's poorest country. In 2007, the total gross domestic product (GDP) was \$8.3 billion compared to \$13 trillion in the United States. Cambodia yields a per capita GDP of just \$578, which is among the lowest in the world.

Significant industrial development was minimal before the civil conflict in the 1970s, as the country had always been heavily dependent on agriculture. Most families continue to be engaged in rice and corn cultivation and produced surpluses of its principal crops of rice and corn. The annual surpluses of these crops allow Cambodia to export thousands of tons of rice in spite of relatively low yields and a single harvest per year. Nevertheless, families generally are self-sufficient in terms of producing their own food.

The civil war from 1970 to 1975 devastated Cambodia's economy as did the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979, and the Cambodia-Vietnam War from 1978 to 1979. During these difficult times, rice had to be imported and thousands of people died from malnutrition.

By the mid-1990s, Cambodia once again achieved self-sufficiency in rice production and began to export small quantities of rice. Large amounts of foreign assistance have helped to improve the country's infrastructure, and tourism became a major source of revenue for the country.



www.aseanaffairs.com

From 2004 to 2008, the economy grew about 10 percent per year, as the country's focus narrowed on the garment industry. It currently employs about 320,000 people and contributes more than 85 percent of Cambodia's exports. Tourism continues to be a strong industry, which welcomes over 2 million visitors per year between 2007-2008.

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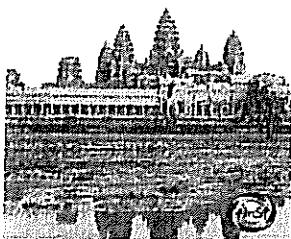
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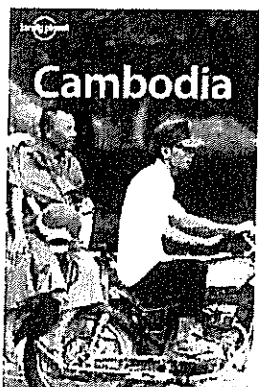


Cambodia

By: Rob Alcraft

Publisher: Heinemann Library, July 2008

Why don't you take A Visit to Cambodia? See the famous sites, travel over the land, and join in the celebrations. Find out what school life is like and what the children might do when they are older. See which sports are played in Cambodia and even learn a few words of Khmer.



Lonely Planet: Cambodia

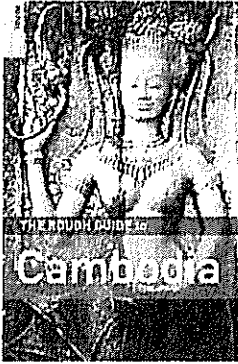
By: Nick Ray, Daniel Robinson

Publisher: Lonely Planet Publications, August 2008

Discover Cambodia

Sunrise or sunset? Discover the perfect light to greet the 216 faces of Angkor's Bayon temple Pound, whisk and sizzle your way through a cooking course in Siem Reap (and don't skimp on the fermented fish paste).

Detour off the temple trail for snorkelling and sunset cocktails on Serendipity Beach Feel the buzz in Phnom Penh: from bustling backstreets to relaxed riverside bars.

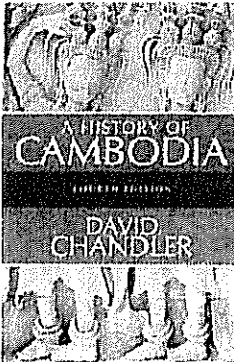


Rough Guide to Cambodia

By: Steven Martin, Rough Guides

Publisher: DK Publishing, Inc., August 2008

The Rough Guide to Cambodia is the ultimate guide to this increasingly popular destination. Features include a full-colour section introducing Cambodia's highlights, from the world renowned towers of Angkor Wat to the stunning tropical beaches of Sihanoukville. In true Rough Guide style, the authors provide evocative and in-depth accounts of all the country's attractions, including the floating villages of Tonle Sap and the atmospheric mountain scenery of Rattanakiri. Critical reviews reveal the best places to stay, eat and drink, plus a detailed guide to Cambodia's intriguing cuisine. There are also in-depth features on Cambodian history, religion, temple art and architecture.



A History of Cambodia

By: David Chandler

Publisher: Westview Press, August 2007

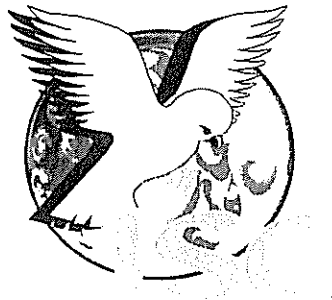
Author David Chandler covers two thousand years of Cambodian history in a candid and concise assessment that focuses on transformation and the historic implications and myths surrounding these changes.

CHINA

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

21 South River Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

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CHINA

Map:



Capital: Beijing

Time Difference: 13 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 1,338,612,968 (July 2009 est.)

Languages: Standard Chinese or Mandarin, Cantonese, Shanghainese, Fuzhou, Hokkien-Taiwanese, Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages

Type of Government: Communist state

Administrative Divisions: 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions and 4 municipalities

Total Area: 9,596,960 sq km (3,705,407 sq mi)

Area: Slightly smaller than the United States

HISTORY

Earliest recorded human settlements in present-day China date back to 5000 BC. The Shang Dynasty that existed between 1500-1000 BC assisted future feudal states to have a more advanced civilization through the development of a writing system. Later, during the Chou Dynasty that existed from 1122-249 BC, Lao-tse, Confucius, Mo Ti and Mencius laid the foundation of Chinese philosophical thought. During the reign of Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang Ti from 246 to 210 BC, he was able to unite the feudal states and begin work on the construction of the Great Wall of China.



www.history-of-china.com

Under the Han Dynasty, from 206 BC and AD 220, trade existed between China and western civilizations. The “Golden Age” in Chinese history existed during the T'ang Dynasty which ruled from 618 until 907. This was a period when art and literature thrived that allowed for the earliest known mass production of books. The Mings overthrew the Mongol, or Yuan, Dynasty established by Kublai Khan, and ruled from 1271 until 1368. The Mings' rule ended in 1644 as the last native rulers of China when the Manchus in the north overthrew them.

The Anglo-Chinese War of 1839 endured until 1842. This was a time of instability which led the Chinese to concede to Western colonial powers. Many seaports were opened for trading, and Hong Kong was ceded to Britain. After the death of Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi in 1908 and the accession of the infant emperor Hsuan T'ung, Dr. Sun Yat-sen was able to lead a rebellion that finally overthrew the Manchus. In 1911, Dr. Yat-sen became the first president of the Provisional Chinese Republic, but resigned in favor of Yuan Shih-k'ai as leader. However, Yuan's death in June 1916 led to long period of internal conflict which eventually led to the establishment of the Kuomintang regime in 1928 by General Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang was of the nationalist forces being advised by Communist experts, but Chiang later broke off his partnership with them.

Japan captured the province of Manchuria on September 18, 1931 and created a puppet state named Manchukuo. Henry Pu-Yi, the last Manchu emperor, was selected as the nominal leader. By 1939, Japan had captured most of the eastern ports and railways of China. At the end of World War II, civil war broke out between Kuomintang forces under Chiang and Communists led by Mao Zedong. Eventually, Chiang and his followers formed a government-in-exile in Taiwan. On October 1, 1949, the Mao regime declared the People's Republic of China.

In 1950 during the Korean War, the regime sent its troops to help North Korea capture the South. The “Great Leap Forward” campaign in 1958 by the government led to the death of over 20 million people through malnutrition from famine. Tibet was officially made an autonomous region in 1965 after China's earlier invasion and occupation. A failed uprising by the Dalai Lama caused him and 100,000 of his followers to escape to India in 1959.

The Cultural Revolution that began in the spring of 1966 was a result of a power struggle between Mao and his supporters and a reformist faction within the Chinese Communist Party.

After moving his base to Shanghai, Mao ordered the closing of schools and the formation of ideological pure Red Guard units that led to the death of millions of people.

In 1971, the world body voted to admit China to the United Nations and President Nixon visited Beijing to meet with Mao and Zhou in 1972. After the deaths of Zhou and Mao in 1976, a power struggle ensued that eventually ended with the reappointment of Deng Xiaoping as deputy premier, chief of staff of the army, and member of the Central Committee of the Politburo. Full diplomatic relations between China and the US were announced on January 1, 1979. During Xiaoping's reign, the country experienced a replacement of Marxist tenets with Western technology and management techniques.

Following the death of Party Chairman Hu Yaobang in May 1987 hundred of students protested for democratic reforms. The protests in Beijing's Tianamen Square led to the deaths of those students when the government troops and tanks entered to pacify the protesters. The following two decades were marked by national and international events which further shaped China into the world power it is today. In 1992 and 1993, the government sought to accelerate the drive for economic reform since that time, China's economy has continually grown at a rapid pace. In 1998, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji introduced a program in 1998 to privatize state-run businesses and further liberalize the economy. The British returned Hong Kong and the Portuguese returned Macao to Chinese control in 1997 and 1999, respectively.

In November 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization after a 15-year debate over whether the nation could have the same full trading rights as other capitalist countries. China was the first nation experience the SARS epidemic in March 2003. Two years later, the country passed an anti-secession law to approve the use of force if Taiwan tried to gain independence from China, hostility increased between the two since March 2005. In July 2005, China announced it was no longer going to match the yuan to the dollar after months of pressure by the Bush administration. In December, the government was proud to announce that the Chinese economy had grown by nine percent that year.

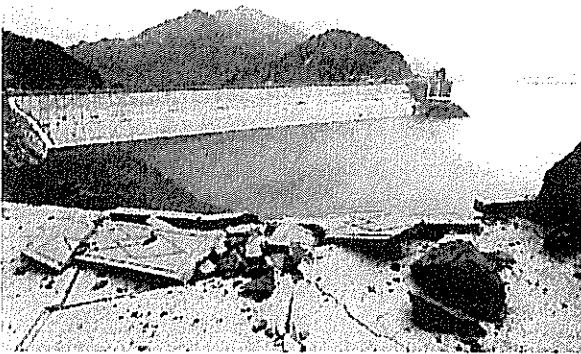
China was successful in destroying one of its weather satellites as it tested its first anti-satellite weapon in January 2007. Approximately 400 Buddhist monks joined in a protest march in Lhasa in March to observe the 1959 failed uprising with the dalai lam. President Hu made the first visit to Japan by a Chinese head of state for over a decade in May 2007, demonstrating an improvement in relations between the two countries.

Beginning in August 2008, China hosted the Summer Olympic Games. The country was successful in winning a record 51 gold medals and amassing 100 total medals. Furthermore, Zhai Zhigang became the first Chinese astronaut to make a spacewalk. This monumental event took place on September 27 from the Shenzhou VII spacecraft. In November, the State Council announced it was going to spend approximately \$586 billion on a stimulus package to wade through the global financial crisis.

GEOGRAPHY

One can approximately divide China into both three elevation levels and three topographic regions. The first level is the Plateau of Tibet that is the highest highland area in the world with an average elevation of over 13,000 feet. The Qiangtang to the west of the region is known as the “roof of the world” at an average elevation of 16,500 feet. The second level is to the north of the Kunlun and Qilian mountains and to the east of the Qionglai and Daliang ranges. The height of the mountains is between 6,000 and 3,000 feet. The third level consists almost entirely of hills and plains that are below 1,500 feet to the east of the Dalou, Taihang and Wu mountain ranges and extend from the eastern border of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau to the China Sea.

The first topographic region is the eastern zone that is shaped by rivers. Generally, the major rivers flow in an eastward direction because the relief of the land is high in the west and low in the east. The second region is the northwestern zone has been eroded by the wind and forms an inland basin. The erosion also causes the region to be arid. The third region is the southwest zone that is mountainous and contains intermountain plateaus and inland lakes. Usually, the region is cold.



img.timeinc.net

Approximately one-third of China’s total area is comprised of mountains. Throughout time, the mountains have influenced the region’s political, economic and cultural development. Mount Everest, located at China’s border with Nepal, has an elevation of 29,035 feet. Additionally, China experiences intense seismic activity that results primarily from the northward movement of the Indian tectonic plate beneath southern Asia. The tectonic movement has thrust up the towering mountains and high plateaus in the Southwest.

South of the bay of Hangzhou, the coast is rocky and has numerous harbors and offshore islands. Except along the Shangdong and Liaodong peninsulas, the northern coastline is sandy and flat. China has over 50,000 rivers that have individual drainage areas that are more than 40 square miles. Of all the rivers, the country has three great river systems. The first is the Yellow River or *Huang He*, which is 2,109 miles long. The second is the Yangtze River or *Chang Jiang*, which is the third-longest river in the world at 2,432 miles long. The third is the Pearl River or *Zhu Jiang* that is 848 miles long. Approximately 95 percent of the total annual runoff drains directly into the Pacific, Indian, and Arctic Oceans.

CLIMATE

Areas in southern China experience tropical and subtropical zones and those in the north experience cold temperate zones. Summer in the north is short and warm while winter is long and cold. In the south, trees are evergreen and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the southwest is a

cold region with temperatures reaching below freezing. In the northwest, temperature changes significantly through the day. In East China, annual average temperature steadily declines from the south to the north.

Rainfall distribution in China is uneven; steadily declining from southeastern coastal regions to northwestern inland areas. The annual average precipitation is 25 inches. The directions of monsoons during winter and summer are different. North China experiences cold and dry winters between November and April when monsoons blow from Siberia and the Mongolian Plateau. Between May and October, warm and humid summer monsoons from the seas meet cold air from the north. The outcome is plenty of rain that accounts for 80 percent of the total annual precipitation.

EDUCATION

Between 770 and 221 BC, Confucian philosophy began to be adopted based on The Four Books and The Five Classics that outlined the principles of society and government. Later, during the 16th century, education was for the elite few. The curriculum taught rites, music, archery, chariot riding, history and mathematics, commonly referred to as the “Six Arts.” Western education took root in China following the Opium War, fought against the British from 1840 to 1842. Christian missionaries were the primary founders of new schools, and Chinese officials adopted the civil service examination system. In 1905, the officials reformed the civil service examination system to closely follow Western models.

After the 1949 Liberation by Chinese Communists, the Soviet model educational system was adopted. This new model did not solve the mass literacy problem. However, effort was placed on developing and restructuring higher education. After enacted social policies by the government failed in 1961, the Soviet model was replaced with a two-track system. The first track was vocational and work-study schooling and the second track was regular university, college and college preparatory schooling. The Cultural Revolution that began in 1966 caused the shortening of years spent by students in schools due to political unrest. The Communist Party Central Committee enacted reforms that changed the curriculum offered in schools. Enrollment into primary and secondary schools became based on proximity and entrance examinations into university were no longer used.

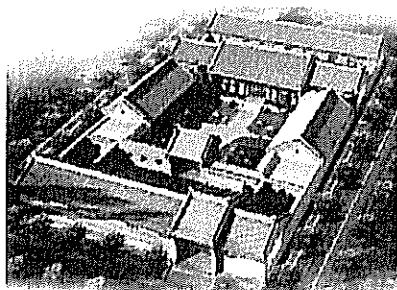
Deng Xiaoping brought changes to the education system when he to power, reinstating educational policies from the 1960s. The reforms were guided by principles that sought to make significant advances in the areas of agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology. Many regions further adopted the 6-3-3-education system in which a student spends six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school and three years in senior secondary school. After the 1985 “Decision on Reforming the Education System,” one policy within the reform was to make the first nine years of school compulsory.

In 2002, the Chinese Ministry of Education reported that 20,360,200 students were enrolled in 111,800 kindergartens. Enrollment in the 456,900 primary schools was at 121,567,100, while the number of primary school teachers was 5,778,900. Additionally, 97.02 percent of primary school graduates were able to join junior secondary schools. Enrollment at 65,600 junior

secondary schools was 66,874,300. However, only 58.3 percent of the junior secondary school graduates pursued studies in senior secondary school. Furthermore, there were 1396 Regular Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a total enrollment of 9,033,600, and 607 HEIs for adults with a total enrollment of 2,223,200. The number of graduate students admitted into HEIs and research institutions was 202,600; with 164,200 students pursuing a master's degree and 38,400 were PhD candidates.

TRADITIONS

Each Chinese province has its own unique tradition. The overall, traditions are dependent upon spirituality and the belief in life after death and reincarnation. In China, as in other cultures, there has a focus on lucky numbers, with even ones considered luckier than odd ones. The number 8 is considered extremely lucky. Days are tracked through the Chinese lunar calendar developed from ancient times. Dark-colored traditional clothing is preferred over light ones.



arts.cultural-china.com

Feng shui is an ancient Chinese art used to promote health, happiness and prosperity through the spatial arrangement of objects. Traditional Chinese architecture is based on the principles of balance and symmetry and uses wood that symbolizes life. Builders join rectangular shapes of various sizes to form a building.

Chinese cuisine is distinguished among four major regions. The first region is the northern plain that includes Beijing. Mongolian influence has made the eating of mutton and lamb popular in the region. Staple grains are wheat, barley, millet and soybeans, while breads and noodles are the anchor meals. The second region is the east that is dominated by the Yangtze River. It is referred to as the “land of fish and rice” due to proximity to the sea and lowlands good for rice cultivation.

The third region is the south famous for Cantonese cooking of the Guangdong Province. Ideal climate allows for the cultivation of nearly everything and the coast provides, namely seafood. Cooking methods and recipes are varied and stylish. The fourth region is the west with the productive Szechwan and Hunan Provinces. Rice, citrus fruits, bamboo, and mushrooms are in abundance. Food is primarily prepared using steam and with various spices. The cooked food from the various regions is served at once, and is eaten using chopsticks and soup is consumed with a wide spoon.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

China's population comprises a large number of ethnic and linguistic groups, with the Han group forming the most homogeneous mass of the Chinese people. Therefore, the population is classified according to linguistics rather than ethnicity. Approximately 55 minority groups are

spread over nearly three-fifths of China's total area. Depending on the size of the groups, some have been provided with some autonomy. The largest language family groups are speakers of Sino-Tibetan and Altaic languages. In addition, there are smaller number of groups that speak Indo-European, Austro-Asiatic, and Tai languages.

The Han Chinese is the most widely spoken language among the Sino-Tibetan family. They speak several mutually unintelligible dialects and differ from region to region. Mandarin, the most prominent Chinese tongue, has three variants. The first variant is the Beijing variant that has been officially adopted as the basis for a national language. The second is the Chengdu or Upper Yangtze variant in the west, and the third is the Nanjing or Lower Yangtze variant in the south. Another well-known dialect is Cantonese dialect of the Hakka language. Other Mandarin speakers are the Manchu and the Hui, who are Chinese Muslims. The Hui are descendants of Persian and Central Asian Muslims who intermarried with several Chinese nationals.

The largest minority group is the Zhuang who live primarily in the Zhuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi. Tibetans are spread over the entire Qinghai-Tibetan highland region and maintain their tribal characteristics and farm, raise livestock, and hunt for food. Many ethnic groups, especially in the southwest, are geographically intermixed. Additionally, the groups preserve their individual cultural traits and live in relative isolation due to language barriers and different economic structures.

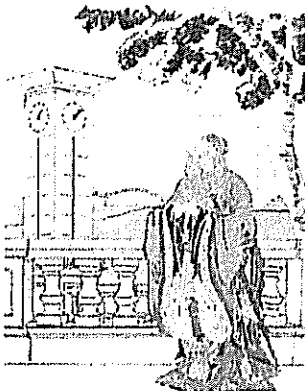
The Altaic language family minorities are found living entirely in northwestern and northern China. The language family has three branches that are namely Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus. The Uighur are the largest Turkic-speaking minority and depend on irrigated agriculture for their livelihood. The Mongolians are a nomadic people and are the most widely-dispersed minority.

The Tajiks are another people who belong to language family groups other than the Sino-Tibetan and the Altaic. The Tajiks in the west have relations with the people of Tajikistan. The Kawa people live near China's border with Burma, while certain speakers of languages in the Tai family have relations with the Thai of northern Thailand and another with the Shan people of Burma.

Religion is a determining factor of the roles and responsibilities of a Chinese family member. Confucianism teaches social order and behavior. The father is a strong leader and decision maker and who strongly influences his children's career path. However, fathers no longer arrange marriages. Brides do not change their names, and children will usually live with their parents until marriage. Chinese law requires that a couple can only have one child. Exception to the rule is common among minority groups and areas that have a labor shortage.

RELIGION

China is among the great centers of religious thought and practices, and is the origin of the Confucianism and Daoism belief systems. For centuries, these systems formed the core of Chinese society and governance. Present-day Buddhist sects such as Zen and Pure Land have developed through time in the country. From 1949, China officially became an atheist nation,



www.commercialappeal.com

with the allowance of the observance of state-monitored religious practices. Approximately two-fifths of the total population states that they are nonreligious or atheist. One-fourth of the total population states that they follow various indigenous folk religions. A majority of those following Buddhism and Islam are members of non-Han minorities. Many Christians are converts of the Evangelical Protestant denominations.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays follow the Chinese lunar calendar, with the first official public holiday celebrated on January 1. The Chinese New Year celebrations fall either January or February. It is the most important Chinese holiday, and is observed through several days of festivities. March 5 marks the changing seasons, from winter to spring. This holiday is called *Jing zhe*, and people perform rituals to assist in renewing the fertility of the earth. March 8 is International Women's Day and Labor Day is celebrated on May 1.

Birthday of Confucius, also called k'ung Fu-tzu, Teachers' Day, and is observed on September 28. October 1 and 2 is when National Day is celebrated as a public holiday. Sun Yat-sen's birthday is celebrated on November 12. Additional traditional festivals are the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first lunar month, the Dragon Boat Festival on the 5th day of the fifth lunar month, and the Moon Festival on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month.

ECONOMY

After the 1970s reforms and open policy, China has had a thriving economy. An annual growth rate of around 9.7 percent has allowed millions of China's citizens to move out of absolute poverty. Over the last three decades, China accounted for over 75 percent of poverty reduction in the developing world. Changing from a centrally planned economic system to a market-oriented economy has assisted in the raising of incomes and the dramatic improvement of rural and urban economies and human development indicators. One such indicator is the illiteracy rate, which official estimates show dropped from 37 percent in 1978 to fewer than 10 percent in 2005.

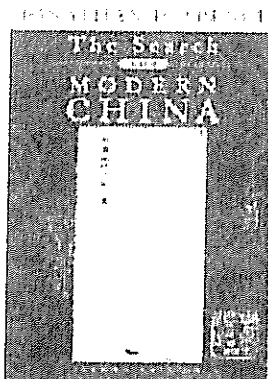
For the first time in many years, the global financial crisis slowed foreign demand for Chinese exports. The government has decided that for GDP to continue growing in the future, domestic consumption needs to increase. Presently, China is one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world due to the "one child" policy.

Moving forward, the government faces many economic development challenges. To counter high domestic savings rate and low domestic demand, it needs to strengthen the country's social programs. It also needs to find ways of growing the number of jobs. The government also needs to reduce corruption and other crimes and contain environmental damage and social strife.

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SUGGESTED READING



The Search for Modern China

By: Jonathan D. Spence

Publisher: W.W. Norton & Co.; Second Edition, 1999

This book evaluates four centuries of political and social change in China.

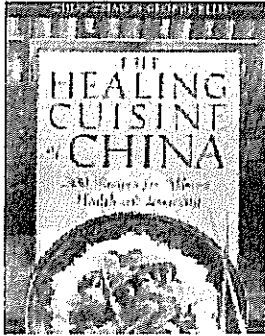


Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China

By: Jung Chang

Publisher: Touchstone, 2003

Wild Swans is a bestselling classic translated into thirty languages. The book provides a memoir and a detailed eyewitness history from the perspective of Chang. The reader will get a glimpse of the female experience in twentieth-century China.

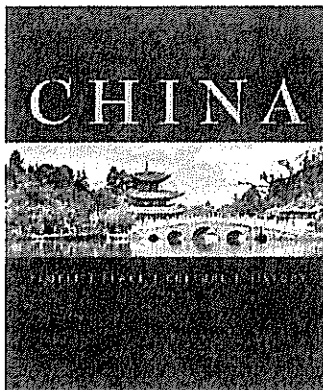


The Healing Cuisine of China: 300 Recipes for Vibrant Health and Longevity

By: Zhuo Zhao, George Ellis

Publisher: Healing Arts Press, 1998

This book contains over 300 authentic Chinese recipes. The authors discuss theories that shape traditional Chinese beliefs about health, and then tie these beliefs with Western medical knowledge. The book also includes a fitness program modeled after the Chinese *qi gong* exercises.

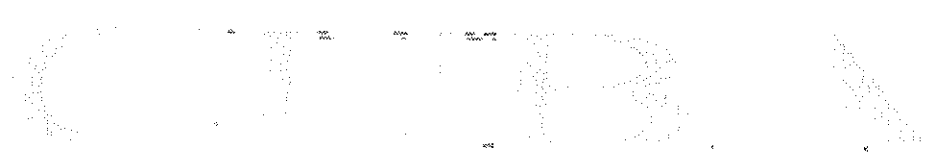


China: People, Place, Culture, History

By: Alison Bailey

Publisher: DK Publishing, 2007

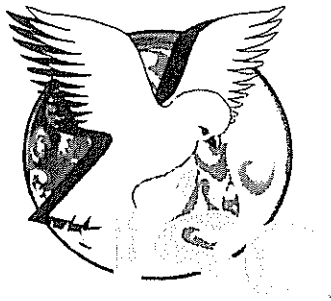
The book explores the four-thousand-year history of China, describing the people, culture, art and architecture, commerce, and other aspects of interest. Bailey also looks at changes that have taken place through time in the social, economic and political arenas.



Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



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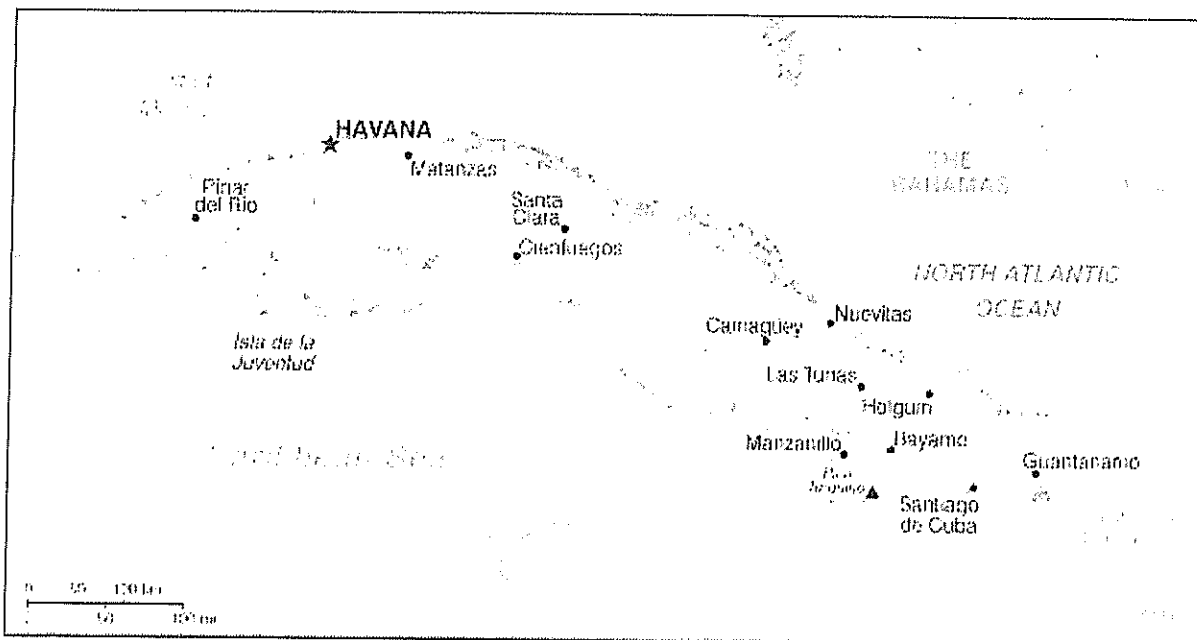
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CUBA

Map:



Capital City: Havana

Time Difference: UTC-5 (same time as Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Population: 11,451,652 (July 2009 est.)

Languages: Spanish

Type of Government: Communist state

Administrative Divisions: 14 provinces, 1 special municipality*: Camaguey, Ciego de Avila, Cienfuegos, Ciudad de La Habana, Granma, Guantanamo, Holguin, Isla de la Juventud*, La Habana, Las Tunas, Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, Sancti Spiritus, Santiago de Cuba, Villa Clara

Total Area: 48,800 sq mi (110,860 sq km)

Area: Slightly smaller than Pennsylvania

HISTORY

Cuba has historically been renowned for its rich soil and successful production of sugar and tobacco, leading to its reputation as the wealthiest country in the Caribbean. The country is also recognized as the only society that has, within less one century, passed from a colonized nation, to a republic and finally to a socialist state.

The first inhabitants of Cuba settled in 1000 BC and were travelers from the coast of Venezuela. These indigenous people were called Ciboney who for nearly two thousand years survived in the land by fishing, hunting and gathering plant foods. Around AD 900, the Ciboney moved to the west of the island as new settlers arrived from Hispaniola. These settlers, the Sub-Taínos and Taínos, were successful farmers who expanded the population of the island until the 15th century at the onset of the Spanish conquest.

Cuba was named an island for Spain when Christopher Columbus landed on October 27, 1492. The early 16th century marked the beginning of increasing Spanish interest in Cuba as a colony. In 1511 Spanish colonists Diego Velázquez and Pánfil de Narváez from Hispaniola and Jamaica, respectively, sailed to Cuba with hundreds of soldiers to convert the natives to Catholicism. When met with resistance, the Spaniards took the lives of many indigenous people. The remaining Cubans were forced to work for the Spanish in mines, on plantations or live as household servants or serve as soldiers. The Spanish conquest drastically reduced the population of Cubans from 112,000 when Columbus first sailed to the island to a mere 3,000 by 1555 due to the harsh mistreatment, rigorous work schedule, limited food, rampant disease and suicide.

This Caribbean island proved to be a strategic location for European merchants. Twice a year, Cuba would become an important transfer point and advantageous stop on the exchange route between Spain and the Americas with the trade of European goods with American resources. The Spanish King Charles I built a naval base in Cuba's capital city Havana to protect his colony from attacks of the French and other Europeans who similarly desired success with the Cuban exports. Expatriates continued to settle in Cuba. Many of Cuba's oldest towns were established by these new inhabitants. As the Europeans increased in prominence and wealth, the native Cubans continued to live in general poverty.

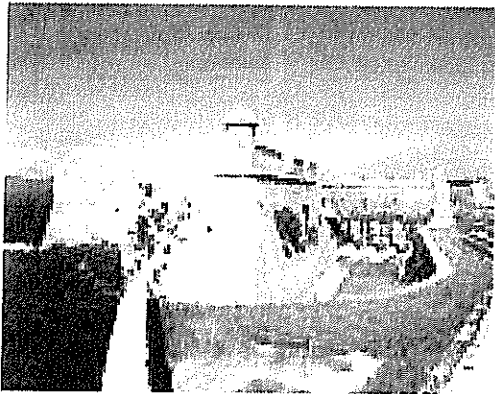
The native population was soon outnumbered in the 17th century when Cuba began to import Africans to serve as slaves in copper mines and sugar plantations to replace the rapidly deteriorating population of indigenous laborers. Unlike other nations during that time, Cuba offered its slaves the opportunity to purchase their freedom. The blacks, whites and mulattos who populated the island became the symbol of the new mixed culture that resulted. Along with the racial blending, their religions, music, language, foods and cultures created a fresh Cuban culture.

The beginning of the 17th century witnessed the expansion of the sugar trade and industry. Although Cuba's wealthy remained in the hands of the Spaniards and white Cuban-born people of Spanish descent (called Creoles), the country was able to feature its progress through the development of social and cultural institutions. By the latter part of the next century, Cuba's population comprised of 56.4% whites, 19.9% free blacks or mulattoes and 23.7% black slaves.

In the early 1800s, the majority of colonies in Latin America had gained independence from the Spanish, and the Cubans sought to be next. As trade increased between the United States and Cuba with the exchange of sugar for food, machinery, household goods, financing and technology, the colonized nation realized their waning need for the Spanish. The Ten Years' War began on October 10, 1868 with the unsuccessful attempt to gain not only independence from Spain, but also social reforms relating to racial equality, freedom of association and speech, tax reform and active Cuban involvement in their country's government. Although the Cubans did not yet achieve independence, they gained commitments of whites and blacks alike who would support independence.

Slavery was abolished in 1886, and had detrimental effects on the sugar market and led to an economic depression. Meanwhile, the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) began to unite the rebel and revolutionary groups who remained from the Ten Years' War. For over a decade, the PRC prepared for a final war of independence, which began on February 24, 1895. The Spanish responded by dispatching over 200,000 troops to fight for the preservation their colonial power in Cuba. Thousands of Cubans were sent to their deaths in concentration camps where starvation, disease and exposure were common. The United States' involvement began three years later in the name of peace and uninterrupted trade. The US fought to liberate Cuba from the Spanish and support their becoming a sovereign nation. This Spanish-American War took place on two fronts: in the Philippines and in Cuba. Through US support, the Spanish lost control of Cuba.

The 1898 Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish-American War, and transferred all land left in the control of the Cuban revolutionaries to the US. Although no longer in the hands of Cubans who fought for over 30 years for independence, the nation witnessed numerous improvements under US influence. Schools, bridges, roads and sanitation systems were built, and with the assistance of Cuban doctors, medical advances impacted communities. Cubans endeavored to hold the US to their commitment to Cuban self-rule; however "Americanization" of the emerging Cuban leaders and ultimatums favorable to the US were imposed in order for the nation to become truly autonomous.



www.cubainfo.de

Cuba transitioned into their independence on May 20, 1902 with the adoption of their constitution and the election of their first president, Tomás Estrada Palma. The country struggled to successfully establish itself, and thus became largely dependent on the US to intervene when often corrupt and opportunistic leaders took presidency.

Over the next five decades, Cuba was ruled by a series of presidents whose leadership both weakened yet established Cuba. In 1939 the constitution was rewritten to include numerous reforms such as providing women with the right to vote, the establishment of an eight-hour work day, incorporating retirement pensions, and offering citizens the right to strike. This new constitution was threatened by the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar in 1952.

Joined with citizens united against Batista's unconstitutional dictatorship, a young lawyer and political activist Fidel Castro organized an attack to overthrow Batista on July 26, 1952. His unsuccessful attempt led to the torture and murder of 68 insurgents and imprisonment of himself and others. By a nation angered by the dictatorship, these rebels were seen as heroes and martyrs. The following year, when Batista won the presidential election and freed all political prisoners. Now free, Castro left Cuba to plan another revolutionary movement against Batista in Mexico.

The Cuban Revolution was successful on January 1, 1959 when a defeated and violently opposed Batista and his close advisers clandestinely left the country for the Dominican Republic. Fidel Castro was a national hero who rose to leadership throughout the country. When he became Prime Minister in February 1959, Castro purged the government of Batista supporters and reform the economy. Wealth and large properties of the small upper-class was redistributed in order to improve the living conditions of the poor and working-class Cubans. Massive improvements were made in the educational system and healthcare.

US and Cuban relations deteriorated in January 1961 as a result of the US concern of Cuba's communist influence. Castro's proclamation of himself as a Communist in December of that year marked the official beginning of socialist policies in Cuba. The next year the USSR responded to Cuba's request for support of the small communist nation. Throughout the next two decades, the USSR associated closely with Cuba and purchased 64% of Cuba's exports and supplied 62% of the country's imports.

A new constitution was adopted in 1976, and Castro was later elected as president. Castro made great efforts to build a new economy and establish international relations throughout Latin America and the rest of the world. In 1980, the poor quality of life was evident in Cubans' lack of personal freedom and chronically weak economy when over 120,000 people sought political asylum in the United States through President Jimmy Carter's Mariel Boat Lift. Castro's response was to provide urban areas which were previously supplied by inadequate rations food through farmers' markets.

When the USSR dissolved in 1989, Cuba entered period of extreme economic decline, as the country struggled to adjust. Inflation increased sharply; waning oil supplies led to constant electrical blackouts; food was scarce; and transportation systems disintegrated. In addition, Cuba's health system, which had previously been recognized alongside the United States and Canada with the "best health status" by the United Nations, deteriorated. The population experienced malnutrition and extreme discontent with the meager standard of living. Thousands of Cubans escaped their island on makeshift boats and rafts to seek asylum in the US.

During the first decade of the 21st century, Cuba has been slowly built new relations between Latin American nations, despite the US embargo on Cuba. In February 2008 the National Assembly elected Raúl Castro, Fidel Castro's brother, as the new president when Fidel announced his permanent resignation. The Obama Administration has made efforts to improve relations between the US and Cuba. Former restrictions encouraged by the former Bush Administration were lifted, and Cuban Americans living in the US are now granted the ability to send remittances to their family still on the island. In addition, these Cuban Americans are now permitted to travel back to Cuba.

GEOGRAPHY

Cuba's main island is the seventeenth largest in the world. Located at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico, the archipelago of Cuba is comprised of four other groups of islands called the Colorados, the Sabana-Camagüey, the Jardines de la Reina and the Canarreos. Cuba extends 180 km in the north to its limit of the Florida Peninsula in the US. Its southern limits extend 140 km to Jamaica, and 77 km in the west to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.



www.images.google.com

The diversity displayed in Cuba's geography is unique. While most of the island is covered by fertile plains, three mountain ranges and five vital rivers add variety to Cuba. The Sierra de los Organos mountain range is located in the Western region. In the east is the Sierra Maestra, and between the two in the central region of the country is the Sierra del Escambray mountain range. Turquino Peak in the Sierra Maestra reaches a height of 1,974 meters above sea level and is the highest point in the country.

The Cauto, Toa, Sagua la Grande, Zaza and Caonao Rivers contribute to the fertility of Cuba's agriculture. Further enriching and beautifying the country are its nearly 300 beaches, caves, forests, swamps and grasslands. Cuba is home to numerous natural resources including nickel, copper, petroleum, timber and cobalt.

Cuba's largest city is the capital, Havana in the western side of the country. It is followed by Santiago de Cuba in the east. Other major cities include Matanzas and Trinidad, which were each established during the mid-16th century.

CLIMATE

Situated south of the Tropic of Cancer, Cuba experiences mild and subtropical weather. Average yearly temperature is between 20°C and 35°C (68°F and 95°C), and is heavily influenced by trade winds and marine breezes. Two seasons dominate Cuban climate: the dry season between November and April, and the rainy season from May to October. While droughts are common, at least one hurricane every other year can be expected. Generally the eastern coast is subject to hurricanes between August and November. The damages of these storms can be detrimental to houses and agricultural crops.

The east of the country is slightly warmer than the western part. During the short winter season, cool winds sweep the country from the North. Daily temperature is around 20°C (68°F), but at time drops to 10°C (50°F). Summer and autumn rainfall accumulates less in the East than in the West, averaging 860mm (33.9 in) and 1730mm (68.1 in), respectively.

EDUCATION

Training young Cuban children in the principles and values of socialism is of great importance to the government. Values such as collective cohesion and group identity rather than individualism are instilled in infants attending child care centers. All levels of education, from primary to higher education is completely funded by the government.

The Socialist Revolution ending in 1959 had drastically improved education throughout the entire country. Before 1959, class and race were strong determinants that indicated access to healthcare, food clothing, education and housing. Only 45% of the population had completed primary education. Nine percent had completed secondary, and 4% completed higher education. Over the years, education became much more readily available to the entire population, that by 1988, 100% of children had received primary education, 85% secondary, and 21% higher education.

Throughout schooling years, children are taught to harness their individual achievement for the betterment of the collective group—Cuba. A year is set aside in high school for all children to attend boarding school alongside students from across the country. The propose is to teach the value of uniting in common projects and improving social skills. In addition, for those who are interested in pursuing agricultural work, these students are taught those particular skills.

In an effort to produce more professionals and reduce economic inequality, the Cuban government freely offers higher education to any citizen who desires to pursue it. The unfortunate result is a high population of recent graduates seeking opportunities in a limited pool of white-collar jobs, while agricultural and industrial jobs suffer with scarce number of willing workers to fill those positions.

TRADITIONS

Staple foods in Cuba are rice and beans. Accompaniments include fried plantains, tubers and vegetables. Common meats eaten are pork and chicken. Under the influence of the US and later the Soviet Union, Cuba was strongly discouraged to diversify its agriculture to produce crops other than sugar. As a result, more than half of the necessary foods have historically been imported from other countries. Cubans are given monthly ration books called *libretta* by which they received their staples of rice, oil, sugar, beans and soap. Unfortunately these rations have slowly decreased since the economic crisis in the 1990s commonly known as the “Special Period During Peacetime,” or “Special Period.”

Despite the difficulty under which many Cubans live, they enjoy expressing their rich and vibrant culture through literature, art, music and dance. Their unique blend of Spanish, French and African rhythms and music has created a notable and infectious form of music which has greatly inspired popular music throughout the Caribbean. From such beats have derived music and dance forms such as the *contradanzas*, *danzón*, *son*, *chachachá*, *rumbalguaguanco* and *salsa*.

Family life is strongly influenced by the egalitarian ideals of Cuba's socialist society. As such, gender roles and expectations are far different from many countries throughout the world. Cuba has been successful in providing opportunities for women to be active in agricultural, industrial and professional fields. Government-instituted day care centers were established in 1961 to allow women the freedom to pursue careers outside the home. In an effort to alleviate the strain women experienced by juggling full-time careers with childcare and housework, the government enacted a maternity law in 1975.

This Family Code clearly described homecare and childrearing as the equal responsibility of both the man and the woman. Men whose wives held jobs outside the home are required to perform an equal amount of housework. Although the enforcement of these laws and codes has been less than perfect, Cuban women have received immense governmental and social support to excel in education, pursue career options, enjoy reproductive rights and health, and procure legal protection against discrimination and abuse.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

Streaming from a long history of primary settlers, colonizers, slaves and immigrants, Cuba has become a nation of three main ethnic groups. A 2002 census estimates 65.1% of the population is white, 24.8% mulatto (a person with both black and white ancestry) and mestizo (a person with both Spanish/European and Amerindian ancestry), and 10.1% black.

Cuba's estimated population in 2009 is 11,451,652. Seventy-six percent of the population lives in the island's urban cities, namely Havana. In 2007, the estimated population of Havana was 2,168,255. Santiago de Cuba is home to nearly 500,000 people. Life expectancy at birth is 77.45 years, which is comparable to numerous developed nations. Cuban culture is largely hospitable. A polite greeting for a man is to extend the hand in a firm handshake. To the woman, a kiss on the cheek is proper.

Cuba's official language is Spanish. While popular tourist locations such as Havana and other large cities English is understood and spoken by the locals, Spanish remains the dominant language used in every part of the island. The Spanish spoken in Cuba is slightly different from the Spanish spoken in Spain, Mexico and South America. Unlike other Spanish speakers, Cubans generally omit the last syllable in their words and the "s" sound is silent.

RELIGION

In the mid-1900s when Fidel Castro came power, Cuba was named an atheist state. While 85% of the population is nominally Roman Catholic, protestant denominations have begun to spread, and Afro-Cuban religions with their roots in the era of slavery continue to be practiced.

During the Spanish colonial period, Catholicism was viewed as a symbol of Spanish influence. For a nation aching for independence, many sought other religious ideologies or abandoned religion all together. Santería is a religious system followed by many which entered

the island through slaves from the Yoruba people of Nigeria. As a blend of African beliefs and Roman Catholicism, Santería is practiced by individuals all throughout Cuba from varying ethnic groups, social groups and varying religions. Many Cubans enjoy being professing Catholics who believe in Santería or follow Marxism.

The declaration of Cuba as an atheist state stemmed from the involvement of churches in scheming plots to counter the revolution. Foreign priests were expelled from the island, and over 400 Catholic schools were shut down. A decade later, near the end of the 1980s, Castro had finally begun to alleviate bans placed on the influence of Catholicism through the print and distribution of religious materials. In 1992, the constitution was amended, and a once-declared atheist nation was renamed a secular state.

A four-day visit in January 1998 by Pope John Paul II was evidence that the Cuban government was slowly relieving its firm restrictions on religious activities. Nine years later, the Cuban government declared Christmas Day a holiday.

HOLIDAYS

Christmas Day is one of five national holidays regarded in Cuba. These special days are both days of festivities and commemoration of past events that have helped shape the present identity of Cuba. During these events and celebrations, many of the venues throughout the many areas are closed, and public transportation is at a minimum.



www.destination360.com

January 1 is not only celebrated as New Year's Day, but also as *Trifunio de la Revolucion* to commemorate the Cubans' triumph during the Revolution. International Worker's Day, or *Dia de los Trabajadores*, is celebrated on May 1. Between July 25 and 27, the *Dia de la Rebeldia Nacional*, or National Rebellion is remembered. Independence day is honored on October 10, and people remember this day in 1868 when Cuba began its war of independence and Ten Years' War against the Spaniards.

Cuba's energizing music and dance are highlights of the holiday celebrations and yearly festivals. These festivals are celebrated year-round and may include parades and large street parties. Fireworks, beer and rum are also commonplace during these festivals. Cuban art, music and dance are widely celebrated at various events throughout the year. *Feria Internacional Cubadisco* is a film festival which takes place during the second week of May in Havana. To honor Caribbean music, dance and religion, Santiago de Cuba, the island's second-largest city, hosts the week-long *Festival del Caribe* and *Fiesta del Fuego* in the first week of July. The city is also home to Cuba's largest and most historic festivals in the last week of July called *Carnaval de Santiago de Cuba*.

In mid-August, European and American musicians join the islanders in celebrating Cuban rap and hip hop in Havana's *Festival de Rap Cubano Habana Hip Hop*. Cubans continue in mid-October with the *Festival Internacional de Ballet*, also in Havana, to feature Cuban ballet and international ballet companies from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Varying genres of jazz are honored in the *Festival Internacional de Jazz* in the first week of December, along with another film festival, the *Festival Internacional de Nuevo Cine Latino-Americano* to showcase new Latin-American films.

The last celebration before Christmas Day is held on December 24 with an extravagant parade including floats, fireworks and musical events throughout the city of Remedios. This day is also celebrated in other towns with slightly less fanfare.

ECONOMY

Cuba's socialist economy is centered on collectivism and general egalitarianism. The entire population owned the "social property" of agricultural plantations, industrial factories and nickel mines in order that all would benefit from the success of the national economy. This social property has been used to provide healthcare to the citizens, as well as social security and education.



www.images.google.com

Cuban government has long since maintained strong control over the economy. However, the 1990s marked a beginning of a slight releasing of their grip in order to directly meet the needs of the people. The government sought to increase enterprise efficiency, address the problem of food shortages and limited goods and services. When aid from the Soviet Union through oil subsidies and manufactured goods ceased in the 1990s, the standard of living of many Cubans declined.

The economy of Cuba has centered largely on its major industries of sugar and food processing, oil refining, cement, electric power, light consumer and industrial products, pharmaceutical and biotechnology products. Cuba engages in trade with over ten countries in nickel and cobalt, pharmaceutical and biotech products, sugar and its byproducts, tobacco, seafood, citrus, tropical fruits and coffee.

Cuba exports \$3.497 billion of merchandise on a free-on-board (f.o.b.) basis. Their most significant export partners are China, with 27.5% of the total dollar value, Canada with 26.9%, the Netherlands with 11.1%, and Spain with 4.7%. The highest valued export goods include sugar, nickel, tobacco, fish, metal products, citrus and coffee. Cuba imports \$11.74 billion f.o.b.

worth of petroleum, food, machinery, equipment and chemicals from Venezuela (29.6%), China (13.4%), Spain (10.4%), Canada (6%) and the US (5.1%).

Cuba provides the services of personnel, including over 20,000 medical professionals, to Venezuela in exchange for 100,000 barrels of petroleum products per day. By 2007, Cuba's earnings from nickel and cobalt production improved as metal prices increased. Since 2004 the country has endeavored to address the chronic problem of electrical shortages by investing in Cuba's energy sector.

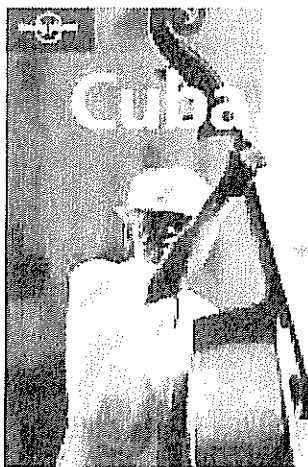
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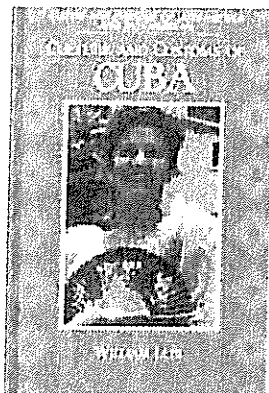
SUGGESTED READING

**Cuba: A New History****By:** Richard Gott**Publisher:** Yale University Press, 2005

British journalist Richard Gott explores the history and enduring ideals of Cuba. In *Cuba: A New History*, the author studies the Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro's involvement with the Soviet Union and Latin American and African nations. While most accounts of Cuban history are written from an American perspective, Gott offers a European point of view which promises to enlighten and inspire.

**Cuba****By:** Conner Gorry and David Stanley**Publisher:** Lonely Planet, 2004

Authors Gorry and Stanley offer a detailed guide to traveling to Cuba. The guide describes the elements of the island nation's vibrant culture depicted through the music, dance, food and activities. For those new to visiting Cuba, numerous maps and accommodation listings are also included.



Culture and Customs of Cuba

By: William Luis

Publisher: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001

From the perspective of a Cuban, *Cultures and Customs of Cuba* provides insight into life in the Caribbean island nation. The information is delivered under three significant periods of Cuba's History: the Colonial Period, the Republic and Castro's Revolution. In addition to the discussion on the many distinctive facets of daily life, Luis explores the impact of the nation on the world-wide scene.



From the Winds of Manguito: Cuban Folktales in English and Spanish/

Desde los vientos de Manguito: Cuentos folklóricos de Cuba, en inglés y español

Retold By: Elvia Pérez, Paula Martin (Translator), Victor Hernandez Mora (Illustrator), Margaret Read MacDonald (Editor)

Publisher: Libraries Unlimited, 2004

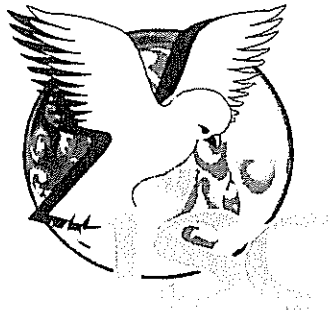
Long-enduring Cuban folklore is retold by Pérez in her native Spanish language and delivered with English translations. Stories from both Hispanic and Afro-Cuban traditions are shared through animal stories and tales from throughout the country. Additional information about Cuban history, culture, traditional recipes and children's games are included to deliver a truly educational experience.

INDIA

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

21 South River Street

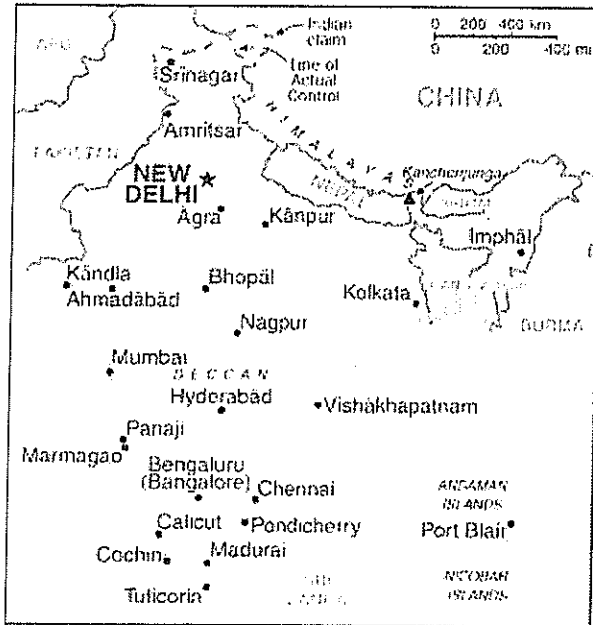
Harrisburg, PA 17101

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INDIA

Map:



www.cia.gov

Capital: New Delhi

Time Difference: 10.5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 1,166,079,217 (July 2009 est.)

Official Languages: Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, and Sanskrit

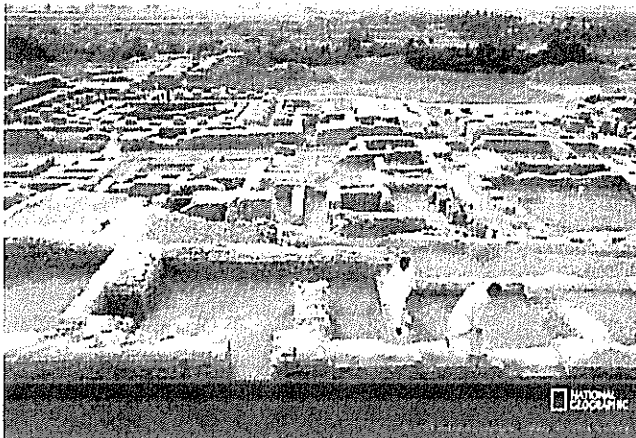
Type of Government: Federal republic

Administrative Divisions: 28 states and 7 union territories

Total Area: 3,287,590 sq km (1,269,346 sq mi)

Area: Slightly more than one-third the size of the US

HISTORY



www.nationalgeographic.com

The Indus Valley civilization, among the earliest in history, thrived on the Indian subcontinent from 2600 BC to 2000 BC. Arriving around 1500 BC from the northwest, the Aryans settled in India and introduced Sanskrit and the Vedic religion, which preceded Hinduism. Buddhism was founded in 6th century BC. One of the great ancient kings of the Mauryan dynasty, Asoka, significantly assisted in the eventual spread of Buddhism in northern India. For the first time, he was able to unify most of the Indian subcontinent.

Vasco da Gama landed in India in 1498. This provided the Portuguese with a monopoly on trade with the subcontinent for a century. Muslim invaders established the Mogul Empire in 1526. With their center in Delhi, the Muslims were able to strengthen and consolidate the empire through Akbar the Great. The British later established the East India Company, and in 1612, built their first factory in Surat. While it was a time of fighting with Indian rulers, the French, the Dutch and Portuguese traders, the British began to grow in influence in the region.

By 1687, the Portuguese lost their rule in Bombay to the British. Lord Clive defeated the French and Mogul armies in 1757, ushering in the expansion of the British Empire in India. British rule continued through the suppression of native uprisings by the East India Company. However, the British Crown formally took over administration of India in 1858 after the Sepoy Mutiny of native troops in 1857-1858.

During World War I, over 6 million troops from the Indian states fought alongside the Allies. After the war, however, Indian nationalist unrest was elevated under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He challenged his fellow Indians not to cooperate with the British authority, doing so with a new kind of resistance – nonviolence. Gandhi became the leading spirit of the Indian National Congress Party that organized the revolt. In 1919, the British gave Indian officials added responsibility. By 1935, India had a federal form of government with a certain degree of self-rule. Fearing that the populace would engage in mass civil disobedience, the government of India arrested leaders of the Congress Party in 1942. Two years later, the British released Gandhi, and negotiations for a political settlement between the British War Cabinet and the Nationalist leaders continued.

Eventually, India gained full independence in August 1947. Muslim regions throughout the north of the country separated from India and became the independent nation of Pakistan. This division led to the largest migration in human history that involved 17 million people crossing the borders in both directions. They were escaping bloody riots between sectarian groups.

Nationalist Leader and head of the Congress Party, Jawaharlal Nehru, became India's prime minister after independence. Approval of a constitution in 1949 made India a sovereign republic that followed a federal structure. The government formed the states along linguistic boundaries, and the Congress Party was able to maintain stability due to its overall dominance. Nehru died in 1964 and Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded him. After the death of Shastri on January 10, 1966, Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Nehru, took the role of prime minister. She continued her father's policy of neutrality.

Bengali refugees came into India from East Pakistan in 1971 after the Pakistani army attempted to suppress their India-supported independence movement. These events prompted India to go enter East Pakistan and cause the surrender of the Pakistani army. At this time, East Pakistan became an independent state with the new name of Bangladesh. Later, in May 1975, the Indian government incorporated the 300-year-old kingdom of Sikkim as an Indian state after having been a protectorate ever since the British left the subcontinent.

On June 26, 1975, Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency after a judge found her landslide victory in the 1971 elections invalid because she had received illegal aid from civil servants during her campaign. The declaration involved mass arrests of Indira's critics of opposition party leaders. In 1977, she announced parliamentary elections during March and freed most political prisoners. Indira lost the elections by a landslide to Morarji R. Desai. However, she won the elections of January 1980 and resumed as prime minister.

Tensions arose in 1984 with the attack of a sacred shrine in the Sikh religion in Amritsar called the Golden Temple. This attack by the Indian army infuriated many of the 14 million Indian Sikhs. A band of Sikh holy men and gunmen had been using the shrine as a base for engaging in a violent struggle for autonomy of the Punjab state. The attacks on the Golden Temple led many Sikhs to stage numerous mutinies and desert the army. This culminated with the assassination of Indira on October 31, 1984, by two of her bodyguards later identified by the police as Sikhs.

The ruling Congress Party then selected Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's eldest son, to succeed her as prime minister. After four years in office, Tamil militants assassinated Rajiv on May 22, 1991, as he ran for reelection. The loss of the Congress Party during the May 1996 parliamentary elections and the eventual decline of its power, led to a period of political instability. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the leading political force and named Atal Bihari Vajpayee as prime minister.

India conducted five nuclear tests in May 1998. Within two weeks, India's political rival Pakistan conducted a series of tests as well. Both countries then tested nuclear-capable ballistic missiles in April 1999. For its actions, the U.S. and other countries imposed sanctions on India. Regardless of the sanctions, India refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty for nuclear weapons.

India and Pakistan have maintained a long-standing dispute over ownership of the territory of Kashmir. November 2003 marked the first formal cease-fire between India and Pakistan in 14 years. The truce was to be applied to the entire Line of Control that divides Kashmir. Although relations have improved, significant progress has not yet been achieved.

Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, led the Congress Party to one of the most historic upsets in recent Indian politics during the parliamentary elections in May 2004. Her win caused the resignation of ruling Prime Minister Vajpayee. During his reign, many of the poor believe that they could not share in India's economic growth. Although she was qualified to serve as prime minister, Sonia chose not to do so since members of BJP opposed her taking of the position because of her foreign birth. The Congress Party therefore selected former Finance Minister Manmohan Singh to take office as prime minister. Singh became the first Sikh to assume this position in India.

Although India has never signed the international Nuclear Nonproliferation agreement, U.S. President Bush and Prime Minister Singh agreed to a civil nuclear power deal in March 2006, which permitted the sale of nuclear technology to India. The Nuclear Suppliers Group and the U.S. Congress then voted in favor of the deal in September and October 2008. However, the deal can be revoked if India uses the fuel for its weapons program.



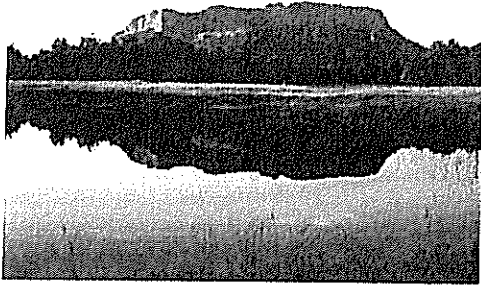
www.upi.com

In July 2007, Pratibha Patil of the governing Congress Party was elected to become the first woman president. In July 2008, Prime Minister Singh survived a confidence vote after losing support from members of the Communist parties because of the nuclear deal. During the summer of 2008, the Kashmir cease-fire was broken when authorities in Indian-controlled Kashmir transferred 99 acres of land to a trust that operated a Hindu shrine. After the government canceled the order, protests and counterdemonstrations took place involving several hundred thousand people and resulting in the death of about 40. Meanwhile, a trade route opened across the Line of Control in Kashmir for the first time in 60 years. India was also able to launch its first unmanned spacecraft in October 2008.

During the summer and fall of 2008, religious and ethnic clashes took place between Muslims and Hindus, and between Hindus and Christians. Beginning November 26, 2008, there were a series of attacks carried out by ten gunmen, which killed over 170 people and wounded 300. Indian forces took three days to end the siege on several of Mumbai's landmarks and commercial hubs.

GEOGRAPHY

India is the seventh largest country in the world, and much of its territory located within a large peninsula in southwest Asia. It borders Pakistan in the northwest, Nepal, China and Bhutan to the north, and Burma and Bangladesh to the east. Sri Lanka is located 40 miles off the southeast coastline across the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar. Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands situated between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea are India's two union island territories.



www.bandhavgarhmeadows.com

Geologic relief is based upon three basic structural units. The first unit is the Himalayas, spanning 1,550 miles and stretching between 125 and 250 miles wide. The mountains form the northern limit of India. The second unit is the Indo-Gangetic Plain, also known as the North Indian Plain. It extends from the Pakistani provinces of Sind and Punjab in the west to the Brahmaputra River valley in Assam state in the east. An important southern extension of the Plain is the Great Indian, or Thar, Desert.

The third unit is the Deccan plateau to the south, a topographically variegated region that stretches beyond the peninsula. The plateau includes a large area to the north of the Vindhya Range and is considered as the divide between northern India, Hindustan, and southern India, the Deccan.

The Ganges-Brahmaputra is one of many peninsular rivers that drain into the Bay of Bengal and account for over 70 percent of the total Indian drainage system. Twenty percent of the remaining drainage system lies in Indus drainage basin in the north and a set of drainage basins in the south that drain into the Arabian Sea. The remaining 10 percent lie in regions of interior drainage and along the border with Burma.

India has few natural lakes. The Wular Lake is the largest natural freshwater lake in the country. Inland drainage occurs primarily over a short period. Furthermore, the drainage is almost entirely in the arid and semiarid part of northwestern India, especially in the Great Indian Desert of Rajasthan. The largest lakes are reservoirs formed by the damming of rivers.

CLIMATE

India's four main climate zones are alpine, subtropical, tropical, and arid. The alpine zone is located in the high altitudes of Himalayas. The subtropical zone is in the northern region of the country. Common in this region are hot and wet summers and cold and dry winters. The tropical zone has two sub types: tropical wet monsoon and tropical dry. Typically, tropical wet monsoon climate experiences average temperature and average to high rainfall. Rain is not common during tropical dry. The arid zone is experienced mostly in the western part of India. Its distinctive features are high temperature and low rainfall.

Usually, the winter season in India lasts from December to February. Average daily temperature is between 50 and 59 °F, while temperatures in higher elevations of northern India may drop below freezing. The summer season is from March to June. The season's most distinct feature are the hot winds, referred to as *Loo*. Average temperature reaches 90 °F; however, temperatures in the western region may surpass the average.

Nearly all of India experiences the advancing monsoon season between the months of June and September. Heavy and continual rainfall is typical. The monsoon approaches with moisture-

laden winds and is marked with violent thunderstorms and lightening. The retreating monsoon season beginning in September is a period of declining rainfall. For most of the country, rainfall ends in November except for Tamil Nadu and other southern states that receives rain from western disturbance.

EDUCATION

In the ancient Indian education system called *Gurukul*, young boys were required to stay at the home of the *Guru*, or teacher, to complete their education. However, women and people of lower castes slowly lost their rights to pursue education. It was not until the spread of religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, Bhakti and Sufism that women were given access to education. Further improvements were made during the 19th century through the introduction of the English language and the reformation movements.

After India gained its independence from the British in 1947, the government sought to make education available to everyone. The Indian Constitution made it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on his or her caste and gender. The 86th constitutional amendment also made access to elementary education for children between the ages of six and fourteen a fundamental right. Presently, the government is taking steps to increase access to education for the marginalized groups of the society.

The education system consists of primary, secondary, senior secondary and higher education levels. A student spends eight years in elementary school and two years in both secondary and senior secondary school. A student only continues on to higher education after having passed exams at the end of senior secondary school.

The higher education system has over 17,000 colleges and universities throughout the country. To address the injustices in society and education, current laws have reserved 7.5 percent of higher education admissions to students from the various caste systems. Fifteen percent is allotted for the “scheduled caste,” commonly known as *Dalits*, while 27 percent is reserved to the other castes.

TRADITIONS

Culturally, family elders arrange marriages based on an individual’s caste, common ancestry, economic status, education and astrology. However, non-arranged marriages are becoming common in larger, more urban cities. Tradition requires that a bride moves to her husband’s family home and that her family pay her husband’s family a dowry. Additionally, women are expected to submit to their husbands as if they are gods.

Namaskar is a form of a welcoming greeting whereby a person places both palms together and raises them below the face. *Tilak* is a ritual mark on the forehead as a sign of Hindu blessing, greeting or auspiciousness. The placing of flower garlands is done as a show of respect and

honor. Applying of turmeric on the threshold of a house is also a practice in the Hindu culture. Daily bathing is also important as a religious practice.

Although cuisine varies within the different regions in India, daily diet for many Indians lacks variety. Rice is the staple food in most of the east and south, *chapatti*, a flat wheat bread is common in the north and northwest, and *bajra*, bread made from pearl millet, in the state of Maharashtra. Generally, people eat two to three meals a day according to available financial resources. Side dishes usually include a puree called *dal*, a legume, few vegetables, and a small bowl of yogurt for those who can afford it, as well as chilies and spices to add flavor to food.

In Hinduism, the cow is considered holy, and eating meat is a rarity and is mainly prepared during special celebrations. Nevertheless, fish, fresh milk, fruits and vegetables are frequently consumed depending on the region and season. People living in the north and east prefer to drink *chai* or tea, which is served with hot milk while those in the south prefer to drink coffee.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

Within India, there are thousands of ethnic and tribal groups, which developed through migration and intermarriage. In general, the people living in the north central and northwestern parts of the country have ethnic affinities with European and Indo-European peoples from southern Europe, the Caucasus region, and Southwest and Central Asia. People living in the northeast closely resemble Tibetans and Burmans, while those in the Chota Nagpur Plateau have affinities to groups such as the Mon. There are also southern groups who appear to descend from peoples originating from East African or from the Andaman Islands, the Philippines, and other areas.

The official language is Hindi, yet English is widely spoken throughout the country. There are four language families from which India's numerous language dialects originate. They are Indo-Iranian – a subfamily of the Indo-European language family, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic. A majority of Indians are speakers of the Indo-Iranian and Dravidian language families.

The Indian Constitution recognizes 22 scheduled languages, of which fifteen are Indo-European, four are Dravidian, two are Tibeto-Burman, and the last is one is Austro-Asiatic. Most of the languages are written over a range of Devanagari script. Additionally, there are several separate languages within India.

For many Indians, family is the most important social unit, and divorces are rare. Extended families often share a common home and finances, and have a clear order of social precedence and influence based on gender and age. The senior male acts as the family head, while his wife conducts the nurturing and home-keeping tasks assigned to female family members. Male children are preferred over female children due to the institution of dowry. After family, the second most important unit is the caste.

RELIGION



www.delhilive.com

The practice of various religions is integrated into Indian tradition and daily life and expressed in household chores, education and politics. Majorities of the religious faiths have common practices, and many of the communities celebrate in the numerous festivals that mark each year with music dance, and feasting. According to the CIA World Factbook, a 2001 census estimates 80.5 percent of the population as Hindu, 13.4 percent as Muslims, 2.3 percent as Christians, 1.9 percent as Sikhs, 1.8 percent practice other religions, and 0.1 percent as unspecified.

Hinduism and Buddhism originated in India; however, Hinduism has gained the most devoted following over time. Within Hinduism, there are significant differences in the belief systems and caste divisions. Nevertheless, there are many common bonds such as attending pilgrimage sites and listening to Sanskrit verses spoken by Brahman priests during birth, marriage and death rituals. Additionally, after Indonesia, India has the second largest population of Muslims in the world.

HOLIDAYS

There are numerous holidays observed throughout the year that are celebrated through festivals. India's three national holidays begin with Republic Day, which observed on January 26 to mark the day India became a sovereign nation. It involves parades, dances and colorful celebrations near the India Gate. The second holiday is Independence Day, observed on August 15. The day is honored through the raising of the national flag in Red Fort, singing of the national anthem and the conducting of other events throughout the country. The third holiday is Gandhi Jayanti that marks the birth of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2. People hold prayer and tribute services at the Gandhi Memorial at Raj Ghat.

A popular Hindu holiday is *Dussehra*, also celebrated in October. It is a festival that is marked by the burning of effigies of Ravan and the reenactment of the life of the Hindu Lord Rama. The festival of light, *Diwali*, is observed on November 2 to mark the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya from his 14-year exile. On this day, people wear new clothes and light up diyas, candles and firecrackers, while distributing sweets among themselves. On November 15, Guru Nanak Jayanti is celebrated to observe the birthday of the founder of Sikhism and first Sikh guru.

The Islamic New Year, *Muharram*, is the most sacred day for Muslims and is observed on February 10 through fasting. Celebrated on April 21, *Milad-un-Nabi* marks the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed. *Id-ul-Fitr* is another Islamic celebration honored on November 3 to mark the end of the month-long fast known as *Ramadan*.

ECONOMY

Trade existed between the Indus valley people of 2600 BC and various Middle Eastern civilizations. During this time, the main economic activity was agriculture. The second urbanization saw an increase in the number of urban centers in North India, which thus stimulated trade and commerce. Division of labor was defined by the system of castes and sub-castes that restricted the changing of occupations and lifestyles to upgrade the lower caste's standard of living. Investment in business ventures by family members was common. In the 16th century, the Europeans transformed trade and commerce within the region.

The British became a dominant colonial force and were successful in driving away other competing nations. However, after India gained independence in 1947, the country was left with a weak industrial infrastructure. India then adopted a planned economic development. The government resolved to develop heavy industries. This effort led to a period of rapid industrialization that caused an erratic economic pattern. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, policy makers directed the country toward an economic policy based on liberalization, privatization, and globalization.

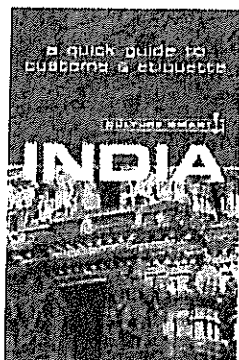
The change has led to rapid growth in certain sectors of the economy. For ten years since 1997, the average economic growth rate was more than 7 percent, thus leading to the reduction in poverty by approximately 10 percent. GDP growth rates increased from 8.5 percent in 2006 to 9.0 percent in 2007, and dropped to 7.3 percent in 2008. Regardless of the decrease, the high GDP levels have contributed to the expansion of manufactures through late 2008. The country has also utilized many of its well educated and English-proficient citizens to export software services and workers to other countries. These services account for more than half of the country's output while using less than one third of the labor force. Approximately more than half of the work force is in the agriculture sector.

Strong economic growth between mid-2006 and August 2008, coupled with consumer credit, a boom in the real estate market, and fast-rising commodity prices promoted inflation concerns. Increased tariff in the agricultural sector and slow progress on economic reforms prevent a sizeable foreign investment on the country's market. Overall, the fundamental social, economic and environmental problem facing the country is how to meet the needs of an ever-expanding population.

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SUGGESTED READING

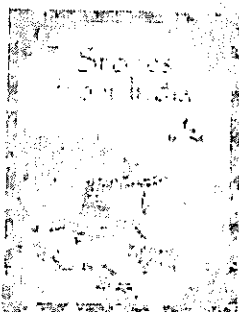


Culture Smart! India: A Quick Guide to Customs and Etiquette

By: Nicki Grihault

Publisher: Kuperard, 2006

The guide on India written by Grihault presents a prospective traveler with helpful information about how to behave while visiting the country. Contents in the guide include customs, values, and traditions, life at home, business practices and communication.



Stories from India

By: Anna Milbourne

Publisher: Usborne Books, 2006

This book retells traditional Indian tales through children stories.

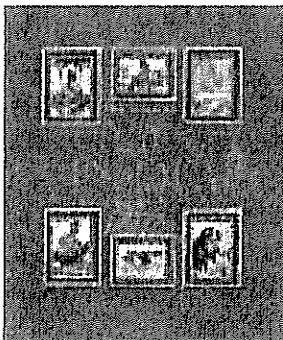


Planet India: The Turbulent Rise of the Largest Democracy and the Future of Our World

By: Mira Kamdar

Publisher: Scribner, 2008

Kamdar uncovers the process by which India has risen to become a global powerhouse from their position as a developing country. The author describes the current events, practices and economic trends in India and speculates the inevitable effect on the financial, cultural, and political future of the world.



Ancient India (People of the Ancient World)

By: Virginia Schomp

Publisher: Children's Press(CT), 2005

Schomp explores the culture of ancient societies of India, and shares about the literature, artifacts and documents during that time.

IRAQ

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

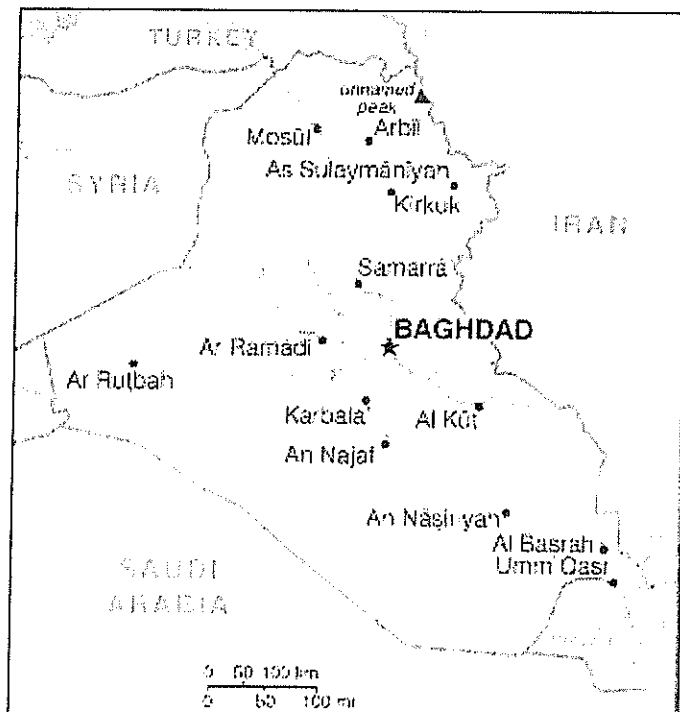
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IRAQ

Map:



www.cia.gov

Capital: Baghdad

Time Difference: 8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 28,945,657 (July 2009 est.)

Languages: Arabic, Kurdish (official in Kurdish regions), Turkoman (a Turkish dialect), Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic), Armenian

Type of Government: Parliamentary democracy

Administrative Divisions: 18 governorates and 1 region - Kurdistan Regional Government

Total Area: 437,072 sq km (168,754 sq mi)

Area: Slightly more than twice the size of Idaho

HISTORY

In ancient times, the present-day Iraqi region was known as Mesopotamia, which literally translates to the land between the rivers. These two rivers are the Tigris and Euphrates. An advanced civilization resided within the region by 4000 BC. Not long after 2000 BC, ancient Babylonians and Assyrians used the region as the center of their empires. Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Mesopotamia in 538 BC and Alexander conquered it in 331 BC. Baghdad then became the capital of the ruling Arab caliphate after their invasion in 637–640AD. The Mongols later plundered the region in 1258. The 16th, 17th and 18th centuries were a period when the Turks and Persians sought for individual control of the region.

During World War I, Britain occupied most of Mesopotamia and received a mandate over the area in 1920. They renamed the area Iraq and recognized it as a kingdom in 1922. Later, in 1932, the new monarchy achieved full independence from the British. However, during World War II, the British again brought Iraq under their occupation. It was not until 1945 that Iraq became a charter member of the Arab League, and Iraqi took taking part in the 1948 Arab invasion of Palestine.

King Faisal II, at the age of 3, succeeded his father, Ghazi I, who had been killed in an automobile accident in 1939. In July 1958 during his reign, Faisal and his uncle, Crown Prince Abdul-illah, were assassinated in a revolutionary coup headed by the military. The monarchy was thus replaced by military rule under the leadership of Abdul Karem Kassim. While in power, Kassim replaced the pro-Western policies, attempted to rectify the economic disparities between rich and poor, and began to form alliances with Communist countries. He was later overthrown and killed in March 8, 1963 in a coup led by the military and the Baath Socialist Party. The ideals of the Baath Party were secularism, pan-Arabism and socialism.

The new leader, Abdel Salam Arif, drove out the Baath Party and adopted a new constitution in 1964. Two years later he was killed in a helicopter crash. His brother, General Abdel Rahman Arif, took over the presidency and crushed the opposition. He was able to gain approval for an indefinite extension of his presidential term in 1967. He did not rule for long, as Major General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr of the Baath Party had removed him from power in July 1968. In an effort to end the decades of political instability that followed World War II, Bakr and his second-in-command, Saddam Hussein, imposed authoritarian rule on the Iraqi citizens. They also used Iraq's large oil revenues to develop one of the strongest military forces in the region. Saddam Hussein succeeded Bakr as president on July 16, 1979.

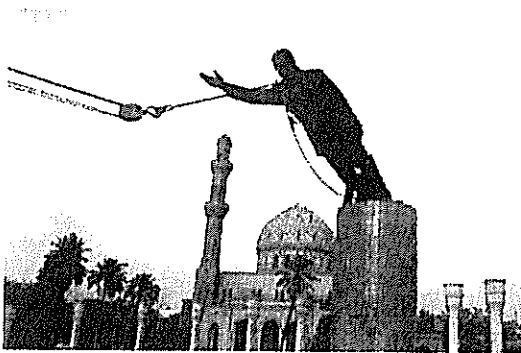
Full-scale war broke out on September 20, 1980 over a long-standing territorial dispute over control of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway between Iraq and Iran. The eight-year war in western Iran resulted in the death of an estimated 1.5 million people, The two countries attacked each other using poisonous gas. The war ended in 1988 through a cease-fire negotiated by the United Nations (UN).

Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 2, 1990 and set up a puppet government. In January 18, 1991, UN forces led by US general Norman Schwarzkopf began the Gulf War, also known as Operation Desert Storm. The forces were successful in liberating Kuwait in less than a week.

Nevertheless, the war did not diminish Hussein's resiliency as a dictator. He was able to crush rebellions by both Shiites and Kurds.

Beginning in 1990, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions preventing the sale of Iraqi oil, except in cases where it was exchanged for food and medicine. The sanctions caused dire suffering of Iraqis as the country's infrastructure and social well-being disintegrated. In November 1997, he expelled the American members of the UN nuclear inspections team.

United States and Britain began Operation Desert Fox on December 16. The operation included four days of intensive air strikes on Iraqi targets within the no-fly zones. The sustained low-level warfare continued unabated into 2003. After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, President George Bush began calling for a change in Iraq's regime. He described Iraq as being part of an "axis of evil." While the Arab world and much of Europe condemned this stance, the United Kingdom was in support of any action by the US.



www.guardian.co.uk

On September 12, 2002, President Bush challenged the UN to pass its own resolution on Iraq, or the U.S. would act on its own. All diplomatic efforts towards Saddam Hussein stopped by March 17, 2003 after President Bush gave him an ultimatum to leave the country within 48 hours or face war. On March 20, the war began with the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom. By April 9, U.S. forces were in control of Baghdad, thus signaling collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. The war was officially declared over on May 1, 2003.

After the war, Iraq still remained in violence and chaos. The U.S. conducted military campaigns to subdue Iraqi resistance that had the effect of alienating the populace who was calling for self-rule. The increase in violence caused the Bush administration to accelerate the transfer of power to an interim government, which took place in July 2004. Saddam Hussein was finally captured on December 13, 2004, hiding in a hole near his hometown of Tikrit. He was later executed by hanging in December 2006.

Thousands of US military lives have been lost in Iraq. After nearly a year of negotiations with the U.S., the Iraqi cabinet passed the status of forces agreement in November 2008. The agreement presently in place states that U.S. forces will be Iraq until 2011. The terms of the agreement include the withdrawal of all U.S. forces by December 31, 2011, and the removal of U.S. troops from Iraqi cities by the summer of 2009. The agreement also gives Iraqi officials jurisdiction over serious crimes done by off-duty Americans while they served outside U.S. military bases.

In January 2009, Iraq achieved significant milestones. On New Year's Day, the government took control of the Green Zone, a heavily fortified area which provided offices and homes of most American and Iraqi government officials. On January 31, peaceful local elections were held to create provincial councils that lacked much U.S. involvement. Voter turnout varied widely by

area. There were regions that reported less than 50 percent turnout while others reported turnouts over 75 percent.

GEOGRAPHY

Iraq can be divided into four topographic regions. The first topographic region is the alluvial plains of central and southeastern Iraq. The plains cover nearly one-third of the country's area, and extend south approximately 375 miles from Balad on the Tigris and Al-Ramadi on the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf. The second topographic region is Al-Jazirah, Arabic for "the island." This is an arid plateau upland region in the north between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Its distinct hill range is the Sinjar Mountains that peaks at 4,448 feet.

The third topographic region is the vast desert region in both western and southern Iraq. The deserts cover nearly two-fifths of the country, over 64,900 square miles. The western desert is an extension of the Syrian Desert and rises to elevations above 1,600 feet. The western part of the southern desert is known as Al-Hajarah, while the eastern part is known as Al-Dibdibah. Al-Hajarah is a rocky desert and Al-Dibdibah is a covered with sand.

The fourth topographic region is the highland area in the northeast and comprises of mountains, hills and plains. The highlands occupy one-fifth of the country--over 35,500 square miles. The relief of this region rises northwards from the Tigris in a series of rolling plateaus, river basins and hills. The relief then reaches the high mountain ridges of Iraqi Kurdistan that are associated with the Taurus and Zagros mountains.

Iraq is drained by the Tigris-Euphrates river system. The source of the two rivers is melting winter snow from the Armenian highlands of Turkey. The Tigris flows 881 miles and the Euphrates 753 miles through Iraq. They both then join together near Al-Qurnah to form the Shatt al-Arab that flows 68 miles into the Persian Gulf. Due to its numerous tributaries, the Tigris is subject to devastating floods.

CLIMATE

There are two climatic provinces in Iraq. The first climatic province in the south generally experiences heat in the arid lowlands of alluvial plains and deserts. The lowlands have both a summer and winter season that are separated by short transitional periods. Summer occurs between the months of May and October. Its characteristics are clear skies, extremely high temperatures and low relative humidity. From June onwards, there is no precipitation. Baghdad's mean daily temperatures in July and August are around 95 °F, with summer temperatures of 123 °F have been recorded.

Winter in the lowlands occurs between December and February. Winter temperatures are usually mild and Baghdad temperatures range between 35 and 60°F. Additionally, shifting winds during the winter months from November to April bring rain to southern Iraq. Mean annual precipitation range between 4 and 7 inches.

The second climatic province is in the northeast. Because of higher elevation, the climate is much more damp than in the lowlands. Summer in this region is shorter, lasting from June to September; winter is much longer. Generally, summer is dry and hot, however, average temperatures are 5 to 10°F. Due to high elevation and northeasterly winds that blow continental air from Central Asia, winters in the northeast can be cold. Although little rain falls during the summer, the annual precipitation in the northeast is between 12 and 22 inches.

Affecting all of Iraq is the *shamal*, a steady northerly and northwesterly summer wind. The land surface heats up as the wind blows extremely dry air which prevents the formation of clouds. A second wind, the *sharqi*, blows from the south and southeast during early summer and early winter. This wind is usually accompanied by more frequent dust storms than are common in Iraq throughout most of the year.

EDUCATION

Before the Gulf War, education in Iraq was offered for free. However, in the following years, parents were required to contribute money for their children's education. Furthermore, the government had decreased the money allocated to education by 90 percent. The educational institutions were therefore slowly deteriorating. Children were forced to bring chalk to their teachers to use in their classrooms. Teachers were being paid at a rate that was one percent of a teacher's salary before the war. Schools were overcrowded, which forced the administrators to implement the operation of schools in two or three shifts during the schoolday.

Of the 14,000 schools presently in operation in Iraq, 85 percent need rehabilitation. Teachers experience shortages of supplies, classroom furniture and textbooks. In addition, many of the teachers lack adequate training to perform their roles sufficiently. Since 2003, there has been a significant decline in school attendance, and the number of girls attending primary school has dropped by 40.2 percent.

TRADITIONS

Iraqis are a generally religious and conservative people. However, dress standards are more relaxed as compared to those in other neighboring nations. Although women still wear the *hijab*, or traditional chador and veil, Western-style clothing is becoming common. Men may also be seen wearing suits. Literary and artistic pursuits flourish within the country while Western artistic traditions contrast sharply with traditional Middle Eastern forms of artistic expression. Iraqi poets are famous in the Arabic-speaking world. Additionally, Iraqi painters and sculptors are among the best in the Middle East.

Iraqi cuisine dates back over 10,000 years to the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians and ancient Persians. Ancient Mesopotamia had an advanced civilization with superior culinary arts. Throughout time, foods of Iraq have been influenced by culinary traditions from the Mediterranean area, Turkey, Iran, Greater Syria and outlying lands.

People prefer to eat either chicken or lamb which is usually grilled over charcoal. A favorite meat dish is served as skewered chunks of lamb or chicken called *kabab*. Another dish is *quzi*, which is grilled whole lamb stuffed with rice, almonds, raisins and spices. *Kubbah* is meat ground with *burghul*--cooked wheat which is either dried and crushed or served with rice and spices. *Burghul* has been a staple in the area since the time of the Assyrians.

A mixture of spices, *baharat*, is used to add flavor to food. The spices include cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, cumin, coriander and paprika. However, Iraqi cuisine is not overly spicy. Differing from neighboring Arab countries, Iraqis add raisins and other fruits to fowl stuffing. Fruits harvested in Iraq are apples, pears, peaches, plums and dates. Various nuts are also grown. Most of the meals are served with varieties of Basmati rice. Food is also prepared with butter, and yogurt is consumed during the main meal as a drink, sauce or side dish.

The most famous dish found in Iraq is *masgouf*, a grilled fish specialty. It is prepared by slicing open a fish and flavoring it with salt, pepper and tamarind. Using wooden sticks, the fish is barbequed over an open flame and served with rice. *Samoons* is a type of Iraqi bread that is eaten with most meals. At the end of most meals, people usually drink coffee.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

Ancient Babylonians and Assyrians originated from Semitic people, and the non-Semitic Sumerians were assimilated over time by successive waves of immigrants into the region. In the 7th century, Arabization of central and southern Iraq took place as a result of Arab invasions. Presently, the number of Arabs residing in Iraq is approximately two-thirds of the total population; Kurds account for a quarter of the population; and the rest of the population comprises of small minority groups. The Arab population is divided between Sunni Muslims and Shiites.

Exact number of Kurds residing in Iraq is not certain, however, they are believed to be the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East after Arabs, Turks and Persians. After World War I, the Kurdish people were prevented from forming their own state. Since then, Iraqi Kurds have resisted attempts to be included in the state of Iraq. Government attacks led to the death of tens of thousands of Kurdish combatants and civilians.

Small communities of Turks, Turkmen and Assyrians reside in northern Iraq. The Lur group who speak an Iranian language live close to the Iranian border. A small percentage of Armenians may be found living primarily within Baghdad and in communities scattered throughout the north.

The official language in Iraq is Arabic, and over three-quarters of the Iraqi populace can speak the language. Arabic has several major dialects that are mutually intelligible; however, significant variations are spoken within the country. Communication between certain groups is made difficult due to the difference in the phrasing of sentences.

Kurdish, having two main dialects, is the official language in the Kurdish Autonomous Region in the north. Approximately one-fifth of the Iraqi population speaks Kurdish. Smaller

ethnic groups speak other languages such as Turkish, Turkmen, Azerbaijani and Syriac. Bilingualism is common primarily among minorities conversant in Arabic. English is also widely used in the conducting of business.

Family life was determined through religious law and tradition before 1959. After this year, all Muslims for the first time were brought under a single body of family law. This was accomplished through the enactment of a secular law that was shaped by *sharia* (statutes from other Islamic countries) law and the setting of legal precedents in Iraqi courts. The law provides guidance to matters pertaining to marriage, divorce and child custody, bequests and inheritance.

Kinship groups are at the core of social units, while rights and obligations center on the extended family and lineage. This leads people to prefer their relatives as business partners, since they will be more loyal than strangers. Kinsmen are related through either descent or marriage. A basic family structural unit of comprises at least three generations. The senior male assumes the role of being head of the family and acts as manager of the household and decision maker. Wives will generally move in with her husbands' parents.

Between the ages of three and six, children have the freedom to learn from their older siblings by imitating them. Passage into maturity from adolescence is quick and there is a traditional separation of girls from the male society, except for interactions with their close kin. Boys begin to be more frequently in the company of their father.

RELIGION

For the most part, Iraq is a Muslim nation whose populace follows either the Shiite or Sunni sect of Islam. The two sects are represented more equally in Iraq than in any other country. Approximately three-fifths of the total population is Shiite while two-fifths are Sunni. The government allows for the discrepancies in the numbers because of political reasons. Shiites are mainly Arabs and Sunnis are divided mainly between Arabs and Kurds but do include other smaller groups.

Ever since Iraq became an autonomous nation in 1920, the Sunni Arabs have primarily been the ruling elite. A majority of Sunni Arabs follow the Hanafi School of Jurisprudence, while many Kurds follow the Shafii School. On the other hand, Shiites follow the Ithna Ashari. Iraq has traditionally been the physical and spiritual center of Shiism in the Islamic world. During pre-modern time, southern and eastern Iraq were converging points for the Arab and Persian Shiite worlds' cultures and religions. Until recently, large numbers of important Iranian scholars studied and taught in the great *madrasahs* or religious schools in Al-Najaf and Karbala.

Other religious groups represented are Christians and small groups of Yazidis, Mandaeans, Jews and Bahais. The diminishing Jewish community that emigrated to Israel and elsewhere after 1948 can trace its lineage to the Babylonian Exile of 586 to 516 BC. The Christian communities, divided into various sects, are primarily descendants of the populace who had not converted to Islam in the 7th century. These sects include Assyrians, Chaldeans, Monophysite Jacobites and members of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

HOLIDAYS

There are various public and Muslim holidays celebrated throughout the year. The dates for the Muslim holidays follow the lunar calendar. In January, New Year's Day is celebrated on the first and Army Day on the sixth. The anniversary of the 1958 revolution that resulted in the proclamation of a republic after the overthrowing of the monarchy is recognized on July 14. The revolution is later celebrated on July 27.

The Islamic New Year, referred to as *Ashura* is a sacred day for Muslims. Another Muslim holiday is the feast of *Id-al-Fitr*, which marks the end of the month-long fast of *Ramadan*. *Id al-Adha* is the Feast of the Sacrifice to celebrate Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to Allah. The birth of Prophet Mohammed is also observed.

ECONOMY

A decline in the number of insurgent attacks and an improvement in security in many areas of the country are helping to reinvigorate the economy. Traditionally, the oil sector accounted for over 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings. Current oil exports have finally returned to levels that existed before the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Furthermore, government revenues are directly tied to the fluctuation of the price of oil. Put simply, as the oil prices increase, so do the revenues to the government, and vice versa.

The current government is advancing toward the building of institutions necessary for the implementation of a new economic policy. In May 2007, the International Compact with Iraq was agreed upon to integrate the country into the regional and global economy. Iraq signed a Stand-By Arrangement in March 2009 with the International Monetary Fund to allow for an 80 percent reduction of debt the country owes to the Paris Club creditor nations. Additionally, the Iraqi government is pursuing legislature that will assist in the strengthening of its economy. The country has introduced a hydrocarbon law and a revenue sharing law under political negotiation. If passed into law, Iraq will have established a modern legal framework to allow for the development of its resources and the equitable division of oil revenues within the nation.

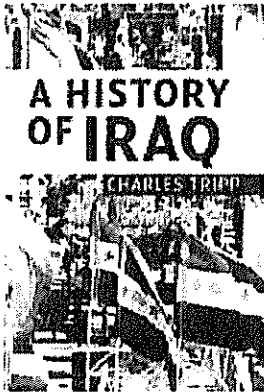
Officials in government are also pursuing ways of attracting foreign investment in state-owned enterprises through joint ventures. At the local level, Provincial Councils are utilizing their budgets in promoting and facilitating investments in their areas. The Central Bank has been able to control inflation by appreciating the Iraqi dinar against the U.S. dollar.

A primary challenge facing Iraq is the efficient utilization of macroeconomic gains to improve the lives of citizens. Corruption within various institutions needs to be reduced and structural reforms implemented to have a successful economy.

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SUGGESTED READING



A History of Iraq

By: Charles Tripp

Publisher: Cambridge University Press, 2007

This book provides the reader with a good overview of the history of Iraq. It has become a classic in the field of Middle Eastern studies and is read and admired by students, soldiers, policymakers and journalists.

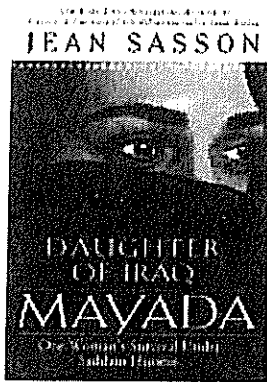


The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia

By: Jean Bottéro, Teresa Lavender Fagan

Publisher: University of Chicago Press, 2004

The authors provide a glimpse into the ancient Mesopotamian religious rites, everyday rituals, attitudes and taboos and the detailed preparation techniques involving food and drink. It also demonstrates how modern cooking techniques are similar to those of ancient times.

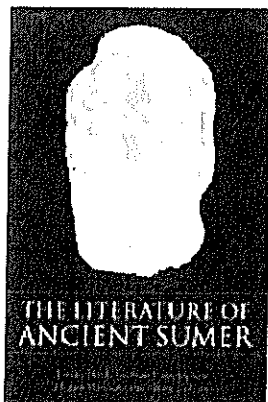


Mayada, Daughter of Iraq: One Woman's Survival Under Saddam Hussein

By: Jean P. Sasson

Publisher: Penguin Group (USA) Incorporated, 2004

Mayada lived a privileged, yet carefully balanced life. However, she was thrown into a small cell with seventeen other women. Over time, the women collectively gained strength through the sharing of their personal stories. They each write their names on the wall using charcoal, hoping that one of them will leave their captivity and tell others of their secluded existence.



The Literature of Ancient Sumer

By: Jeremy A. Black, Graham Cunningham, and Eleanor Robson

Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2004

This book is a compilation of Sumerian literature and is the most comprehensive collection ever published. It contains numerous styles of composition written in Sumerian. Narrative myths and lyrical hymns are documented along with proverbs and love poetry. An extensive introduction discusses the development of the literary works and how Sumerian literature has evolved over the past 150 years.

KOREA

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

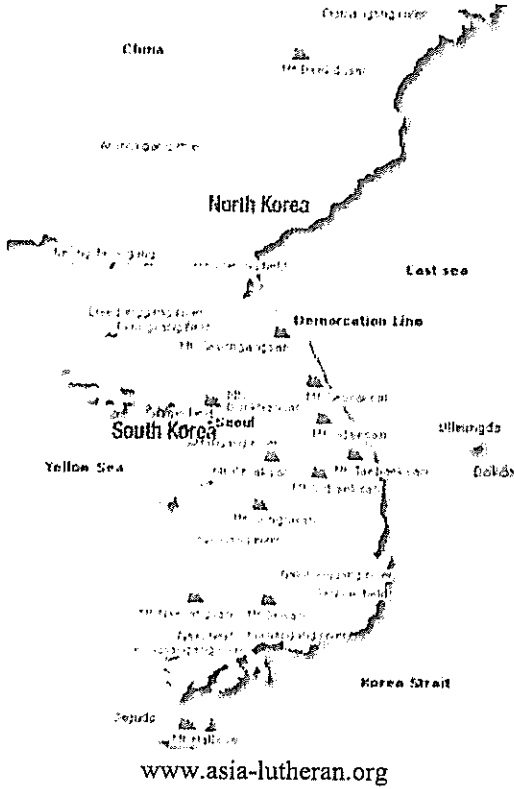
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KOREA

Map:



North Korea

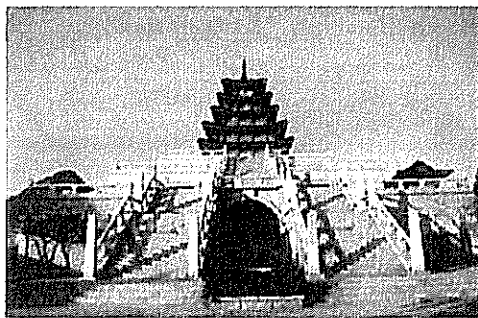
Capital: Pyongyang
Population: 22,665,345 (July 2009 est.)
Official Language: Korean
Type of Government: Communist state one-man dictatorship
Administrative Divisions: 9 Provinces and 4 Municipalities
Total Area: 120,540 sq km (46,540 sq mi)
Area: Slightly smaller than Mississippi

South Korea

Capital: Seoul
Population: 48,508,972 (July 2009 est.)
Official Language: Korean
Type of Government: Republic
Administrative Divisions: 9 Provinces and 7 Metropolitan cities
Total Area: 98,480 sq km (38,023 sq mi)
Area: Slightly larger than Indiana

HISTORY

Archaeological evidence indicates that Korea was first inhabited well before 10,000 BC. Two other distinct groups later inhabited Korea during the 7th and 3rd century BC. By 2nd century BC, the state of Choson rose in northwestern Korea and made its capital in present-day city Pyongyang. In 108 BC, Choson and the northern part of the peninsula fell to the Chinese Han Dynasty.



static.panoramio.com

During the 1st century BC, three Kingdoms rose up out of the many Korean tribes. They were Koguryo of the Yula River Basin in the north, Paekche of the Han River Basin in the west and Silla in the southeast. After centuries of war, the combined forces of Silla and the T'ang China unified Korea by defeating Paekche in 660 and Koguryo in 668. In the 9th century, Silla lost control to the warlords in the outlying provinces and Korea was reunified under the state of Koryo.

In the 11th century, Korea was invaded by the Ch'itan people of Manchuria. It was then ruled by military overlords during the 12th century. From 1627 to 1637, Korea was invaded by the Ch'ing Empire and remained tributary to this empire until the late 19th century.

Korea was liberated in 1945 after Japan's defeat in World War II. Under a wartime agreement, Soviet troops occupied the area north of the 38th parallel and United States troops occupied the area south of that line. The United Nations then proposed a nationwide election, which the North refused. As a result, elections were held in the South and the Republic of Korea was established in the South in August 1948. In September 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the north.

By 1950, all of the United States and Soviet troops had withdrawn from Korea and the North Korean army invaded South Korea and started the Korean War. A truce was signed in 1953.

GEOGRAPHY

Korea is located on the Korean Peninsula in Northeastern Asia and spans 684 miles from north to south. The Amnokgang River separates Korea from China in the northwest and the Dumangang River separates Korea from China and Russia in the northeast. To the west lie the Yellow Sea, and to the south is the East China Sea, and to the east is the East Sea.

The southern and western parts of the peninsula have well developed plains, while the eastern and northern parts are mountainous. The highest mountain in Korea, reaching a height 9,000 feet, is Baekdusan. Despite its small size, Korea has a large number of rivers and streams. Most are very short and un-navigable. The two longest rivers in the North are the Amnokgang

River (491 miles) and the Dumangang River (324 miles). In the South lie the Nakdongang River (324 miles) and the Hangang River (299 miles). Korea also has over 3,200 islands located around the Yellow Sea.

CLIMATE

Korea has four distinct seasons similar to some parts of the United States. Spring arrives in April with pleasant and sunny weather. Summer begins in June as weather gradually changes to hot and humid. The average temperatures range from 68°F to 79°F. Fall starts in October and lasts for two months, serving as the transition period to a long winter. Winter begins in November and last until April. The average temperatures range from 23°F to 41°F.

Korea's annual precipitation is about 59 inches the central region. Despite winter lasting for six months, only 10 percent of the total precipitation occurs in the winter. More than half of the total precipitation happens during Korea's rainy season from June until late July.

The relative humidity is highest in July, with about 90 percent nationwide, and lowest from January through April, with about 30 to 50 percent.

EDUCATION

Education in North Korea is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 16. The education system includes one year of pre-school, four years of primary school, and six years of secondary school. Most schools place strong emphasis on science and technology. Institutions of higher learning offer programs of two to six years in length. The most well known school of higher learning is Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang. It is estimated that 99 percent of the adult population are literate.



www.lifeinkorea.com

Education in South Korea follows a 6-3-3-4 ladder pattern which consists of elementary school, middle school, high school and college and university. Elementary education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 11. Middle school provides three years of lower secondary education to children between the ages of 12 and 14. High school offers three years of higher secondary education to children between the ages of 15 to 17. After graduating from high school, students can choose to apply to colleges or universities to continue their education. Higher education is offered in two to four year colleges or university. One of the largest institutions of higher learning is Seoul National University. It is estimated that 98 percent of the adult population is literate.

TRADITIONS

Koreans' diet consists of three meals a day, with supper being more elaborate than breakfast or lunch. Each meal is centered on plain boiled rice, soup, and pickled vegetables called kimchi. For centuries, kimchi was the staple food of the poor people of Korea. A meal is not considered complete or acceptable unless there is rice and kimchi. There are hundreds of varieties of kimchi. In addition, three to five side dishes are served, consisting of sautéed greens, grill dishes made of up seafood and meat and stews.

The main utensils used in Korea are chopsticks. When eating, chopsticks should be placed into the rice bowl or when finished, beside oneself on the table. Under no circumstances should the chopsticks be stuck into the rice because this would resemble procedures at sacrificial ceremonies for the deceased.

Koreans pay close attention to detail. Hence, it is a common rule to never pour beverages into ones own glass. If your glass is empty, then your neighbors or host will top you off. The same goes for your neighbor. If their glass should be empty, then you should offer to fill it up for them.



Age is considered so important in Korea that even a one year difference means that the younger person will have to address the older person with respect. Anyone older must be addressed with an honorific title and should not be called by their first name. Traditionally, the elderly are much respected. At supper, the eldest person sits and eats first before anyone can begin.

Marriage in Korea is not a relationship between individuals but that of two families. Therefore, the entire family is involved in every decision making step. Traditional customs forbid people from marrying within their own clan, no matter how distant the cousins are. Large families are prized in Korea and over many centuries, families intermarried to form large clans. As a result, there are only a dozen family names including Kim, Park, Lee, Kang and Cho.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

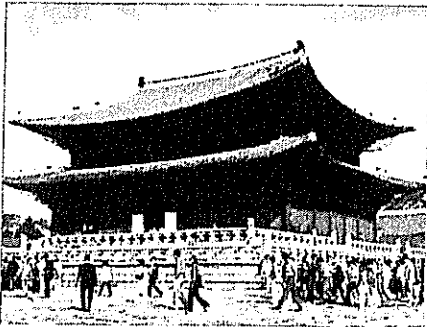
Koreans are an East Asian ethnic group and are believed to be part of the Altaic language family. They call themselves Hangukin or Hanguk in Korean. Ethnically and linguistically Koreans are the world's most homogenous population. So homogenous that if you are a Westerner in a small village in Korea, people will stare at you because they are not used to seeing people of a different ethnicity. There are a few other minorities, but in very low numbers, including Chinese and Japanese.

Korean is the official language of both North and South Korea. It is estimated that there are around 80 million people that speak Korean worldwide. Korean is a distinct language that is derived from Altaic languages and very much different from Japanese and Chinese. Korean when spoken, is soft and lifting. There are no heavy nasal tones and strong accents to emphasize words in sentences. There are about half a dozen different dialects that are spoken in Korea, however, their differences are not great. People living in different parts of the country can understand each other easily.

The alphabet of the Korean language is called Hangul. It is a phonemic alphabet organized into syllabic blocks. Each block consists of at least two of the 24 Hangul letters, and at least one each of the 14 consonants and 10 vowels. This alphabet was developed in 1446 under the direction of King Sejong. Today, almost everything is written in Hangul.

RELIGION

Koreans follow a variety of religious ideas and beliefs. According to statistics compiled by the South Korean government in 2005, 46 percent of its citizens follow no particular religion, 29.2 percent follow Christianity (of which 18.3 percent are Protestants and 10.9 percent are Catholics) and 22.8 percent are Buddhists. Since the middle of the 20th century, Christianity has been in competition with Buddhism to receive new followers. Despite strong Christian missionary efforts, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism have remained the underlying religions of the Korean people as well as a vital aspect of their culture. Additionally, religious practices in North Korea are suppressed.



www.ac-noumea.nc

HOLIDAYS

Early Koreans used the lunar calendar and eventually switched to the solar calendar. However, many still use the lunar calendar to keep track of important dates such as births, deaths, and some traditional holidays. Some important holidays include Lunar New Year, Chuseok, and Christmas.

Koreans celebrate Lunar New Year, *Seollal*, from late January to late February. This holiday is considered the second most important holiday in Korea. During this holiday, families reunite to honor their ancestors and older living relatives.

Chuseok is celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month on the lunar calendar. On this date, the moon appears larger than usual and often is orange in color. This is also referred to as the harvest moon. This is considered Korea's biggest holiday.

Christmas is also an official holiday since almost half of all who claimed a religion are Christians. Unlike the west, December 25 is celebrated by going out and partying, while December 31 and January 1 are spent with their families.

Other holidays include New Year Day (January 1), Independence Movement Day (March 1), and Liberation day (August 15).

ECONOMY

Timbers including larch, oak, alder, pine, spruce and fir were once one of Korea's important resources. But because of illegal cutting after 1945 and the Korean War, the forests in the South were depleted. Recent reforestation and conservation programs have help to reverse the effect.

Korea also has a wealth of mineral deposits, mostly concentrated in the North. These include gold, iron ore, coal, tungsten and graphite. With the abundant mineral resources, 70 percent of its national product is now derived from mining, manufacturing and services.

Only 20 percent of Korea's land is arable because of mountainous and rocky terrains. The farmland only supports summer crop because the winters are long and cold. Rice is the chief crop constituting about half of the farmland. Other crops include barley, wheat, corn, soybeans and grain sorghums.

Economic development in Korea has been uneven, with the South showing great significant gains. Since 1960, the South experienced an 85 percent increased in productivity and a 250 percent rise in per capita Gross National Product. From 1962 to 2007, South Korea's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from \$2.3 billion to \$969.9 billion, with its per capita Gross National Product from \$87 to \$20,045. South Korea has transformed itself from a poor, agricultural society into one of the most highly industrialized countries.



www.bloomberg.com

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SUGGESTED READING

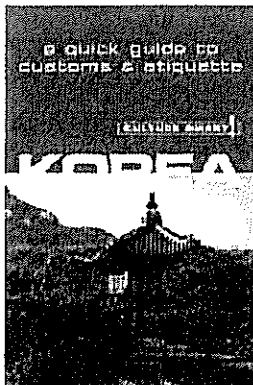


Korea

By: Martin Robinson, Rob Whyte, Ray Barlett

Publisher: Lonely Planet Publications, April 2007

Densely forested mountains, colourful Buddhist temples and sleek modern cities. Discover all this and much more with this bestselling guidebook. Korea's welcoming people, unique culture and incomparable cuisine make it one of the great destinations of Northeast Asia. Whatever your pleasure, we cover it all: North, South, eats, the works! We've reinvented this guidebook with a Highlights section, itineraries, expanded listings, a culture chapter and a practical directory.

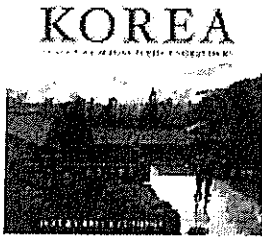


Culture Smart! Korea: A Quick Guide to Customs and Etiquette

By: James Hoare

Publisher: Kuperard, September 2006

Culture Smart! provides essential information on attitudes, beliefs and behavior in different countries, ensuring that you arrive at your destination aware of basic manners, common courtesies, and sensitive issues. These concise guides tell you what to expect, how to behave, and how to establish a rapport with your hosts. This inside knowledge will enable you to steer clear of embarrassing gaffes and mistakes, feel confident in unfamiliar situations, and develop trust, friendships, and successful business relationships.

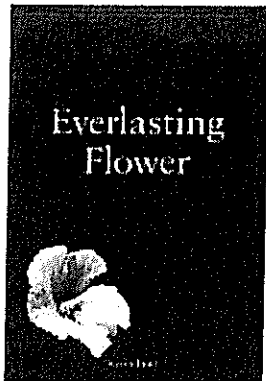


Korea: As Seen by Magnum

Photographers by: Magnum

Publisher: Norton, W.W. & Company, Inc., November 2008

A beautifully photographed portrait of both traditional and highly modernized aspects of life in one of the world's powerful industrial countries.



Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea

By: Keith Pratt

Publisher: Reaktion Books, Limited, August 2007

The defiant dictatorship of North Korea and the thriving democracy of South Korea may appear starkly different, but they share a complex and often misunderstood history that is ably recounted in *Everlasting Flower*.

Keith Pratt traverses the ancient landscapes of the Koreas, from the kingdoms of Old Choson and Wiman Choson to the present-day 38th Parallel division. The book's engaging narrative details the wars, ruling dynasties, Chinese and Japanese imperialism, and controversial historical events such as the abuses of the Japanese occupation.

RUSSIA

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



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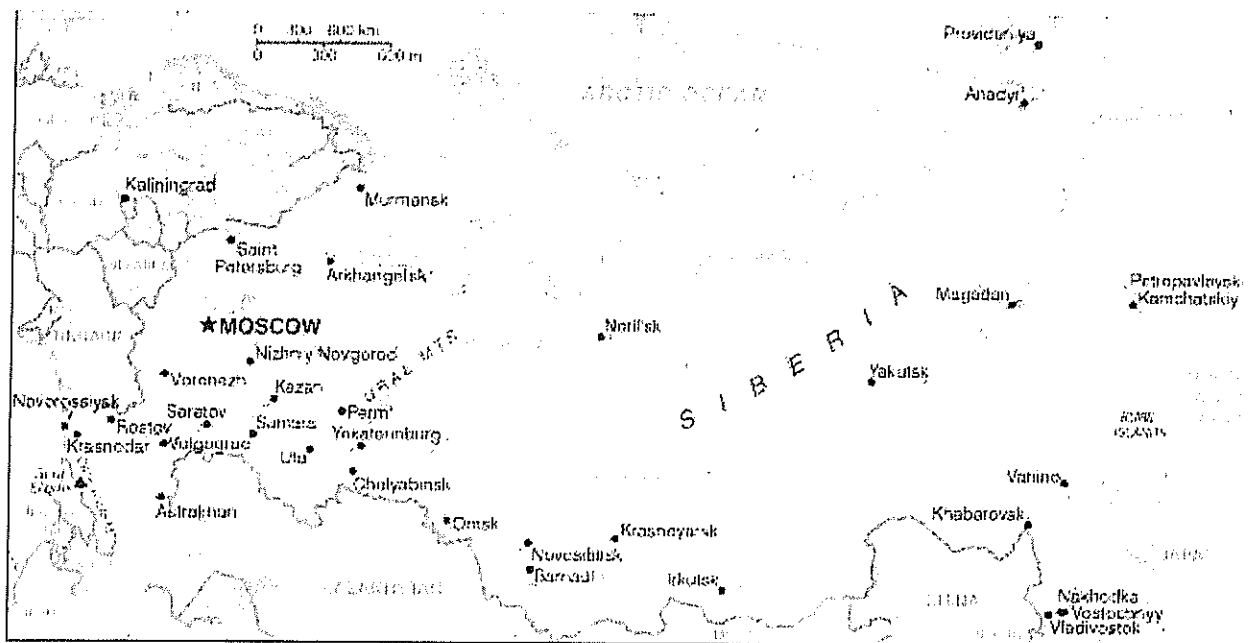
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RUSSIA

Map:



www.cia.gov

Capital: Moscow

Population: 140,041,247 (July 2009 est.)

Languages: Russian, other minority languages

Type of Government: Federation

Administrative Divisions: 46 oblasts, 21 republics, 4 autonomous okrugs, 9 krais, 2 federal cities, and 1 autonomous oblast

Total Area: 17,075,200 sq km (6,592,772 sq mi)

Area: Approximately 1.8 times the size of the United States

Time Difference: 8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time
(Russia is divided into 11 time zones)

HISTORY

Early Russia was a collection of cities that ultimately merged to form an empire. During the early years of the ninth century, the Varangians, a Scandinavian people, came to Eastern Europe by crossing the Baltic Sea. In 862, the semi legendary warrior Rurik led the Varangians to the city of Novgorod on the Volkhov River. Oleg succeeded him, and twenty years later, he advanced southward and gained control of Kiev. His accomplishment thus created the first unified, dynastic state in the region, with Kiev as the center of a trade route between Scandinavia and Constantinople.

Vladimir I, great-grandson of Oleg, ruled over a kingdom in 989 that stretched as far south as the Black Sea, the Caucus Mountains, and the Volga River. Vladimir made Greek Orthodoxy the state religion. Russia was called "Kievan Rus" during the rule of Grand Duke Yaroslav the Wise (1019-1054). Under Yaroslav, Russia became the largest European state stretching from the Gulf



of Finland in the northwest, to the Black Sea coast and the lower Danube in the south, and from the Carpathian Mountains in the west, to the upper Volga in the east. Yaroslav developed an education system and revised the first Russian law code.

During the 13th century, the Mongols, also known as the Tatars, established a state in Central Asia. In 1223, the Tatar's armies led by Genghis Khan invaded the southeast and conquered Siberia, China, Central Asia and the Caucasus. After Genghis Khan's death in 1237, his grandson Batu Khan began a second westward expansion into Russia. Over the course of three years, the Russians defended their homeland. However, the well-armed Tatars overwhelmed the Russians and finally established rule in the 1250s.

www.guidetorussia.org

In the second half of the 14th century, the Russians ceased to follow the Tatar's orders. On September 8, 1380, Grand Duke Dmitri Ivanovich led the Russians to fight and won the battle against the Tatar's armies on Kulikovo Field. Tatar's power ended one hundred years later during the rule of Ivan III (1462-1505). In 1480, Ivan III established Russia's national independence and Kievan Rus became known as Russia. Under the rule of Ivan III's son, Vasily III (1505-1533), all the lands of Russia were finally unified. They formed a new united state, and the feudal wars ended. Ivan IV, also known as "Ivan the Terrible", was the first ruler to be crowned tsar (emperor). Under his rule, the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates were conquered. As a result, the Volga region, western Siberia, and Urals became a part of Russia's territory.

After the death of Ivan IV came a period known as the "Time of Troubles." During this period, another tsar quickly replaced a presiding tsar. Taking advantage of the instability, the Poles attacked and conquered Moscow in 1610. However, a popular movement led by Kuzma Minin and Duke Dmitri Pozharsky, saved the country. After several bloody battles, Moscow was liberated. The State Council assembled in 1613, electing Mikhail Romanov as the new tsar.

In 1689, 17 year-old Tsar Peter (1672-1725) inherited the throne and introduced many reforms into Russia. He built metal works that enabled Russia to produce its own arms. In addition, he began a textile industry. Tsar Peter divided the country into provinces ruled by governors who were responsible for tax collection, the armed forces and public order. He also introduced new schools and textbooks on various subjects and opened an Academy of Science. For his remarkable accomplishments, Peter became known as "Peter the Great."



The Russian Empire made great advancements during the reign of Catherine II (1729-1796). Under her reign, a liberated press was introduced, yet freedom of speech was limited. In 1773, a massive peasant rebellion led by Emelyan Pugachev swept through Russia. It was the greatest popular revolt in Europe.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France invaded Russia but was defeated. In the latter half of the 19th century, Russia was gradually transformed from a feudal society to a capitalist industrial power. Food, textiles and machine-producing industries all flourished. Railroad construction expanded on a massive scale between 1860-1890. By the end of the century, the Siberian main line connecting western Russia with the Far East had been completed.

student.britannica.com

In 1881, Tsar Alexander II was assassinated by the Narodnaya Volya ("People's Freedom"). Alexander III (1845-1894) inherited the throne as the new tsar and established a savage regime. The leaders of Narodnaya Volya were put to death. Nevertheless, workers' disturbances continued and the first workers' unions were established. In the 1890s, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) began his revolutionary activities in Russia and in 1903 founded the Communist Party.

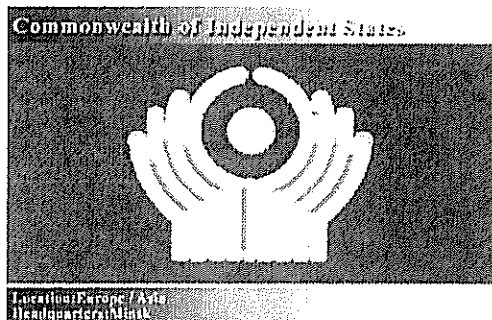
In 1894, the new tsar Nicholas II (1868-1917) came to the throne. In the summer of 1914, World War I broke out. Russia, along with Britain and France, was drawn into a vast and lengthy war against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. A bloody civil war broke out in 1918. The Communists "Red" and monarchists "White" fought for control of the country. Under the leadership of Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the Communists were triumphant in 1922.

After the November 1917 Revolution and civil war, the former empire was divided into several independent socialist republics. In 1922, representatives of four republics: Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia (Belarus), and Transcaucasia (now Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) signed a declaration forming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). A Georgian, Joseph Stalin, took over as general secretary after Lenin's death in 1924. He ruled until his death in 1953.

During the 1930s, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan joined the USSR. At the beginning of World War II, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

were incorporated by the USSR in 1940. From 1920 to 1940, great improvements were made toward education. Almost 50 million men and women became literate. In 1930, universal primary education was introduced. Russia was also the first country in the world to introduce free health care to all citizens. On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the USSR. Six months later, German troops occupied half of the west of the Soviet Union. The Russians counter-attacked and eventually drove the German troops from Russia in 1944. Later, they succeeded in capturing Berlin on May 1, 1945.

In 1953, Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) became general secretary. During his reign, Russia made some outstanding achievements including the launching of the first artificial satellite, the first nuclear power station and the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin. In 1964, Khrushchev was removed from power because of internal politics. Later in 1985, the new general secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev endeavored to save the Party and the country with widespread reforms. He was the first and the last president of the USSR.



www.mapsofworld.com

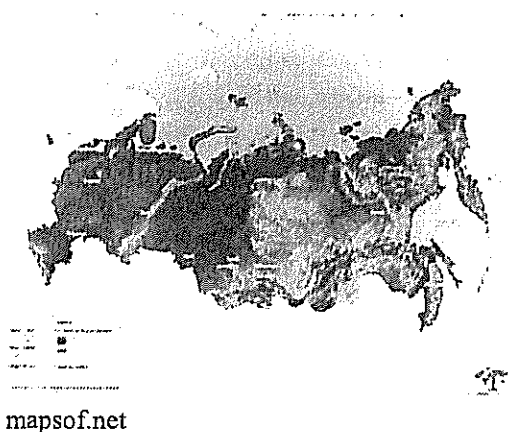
In August 1991, The USSR was divided into fifteen independent countries: the Russian Federation, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldavia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Currently, most of the countries cooperate under the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have joined the European Union (EU).

The first president of the Russian Federation was Boris Yeltsin who ruled until 1999. The country was on the brink of economic collapse after independence. In an attempt to establish a market-based economy, the government ceased controlling prices for most items sold. Steps were also taken to privatize industries. The eventual outcome of the privatization was that individuals, called oligarchs, gained control of large segments of the economy.

Yeltsin resigned on December 31, 1999, and Vladimir Putin became acting president, moving from his post as prime minister. Putin won the March 2000 presidential elections, thus giving him a full term as president. One of his first actions as president was to divide the country into seven administrative districts, with each district governed by a presidential appointee. Putin also set out to enhance Russia's relations with other European countries, China and India, and maintain Russia's relations with Iran. After the 2001 terrorist attacks, he was in opposition to the planned military intervention against Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, the political and economic power of the oligarchs was reduced. The government also restricted certain television networks whose owners were deemed unfriendly to Putin.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev was selected by Putin to succeed the presidency. After the March 2008 elections in which Medvedev was voted to become president, he returned Putin's favor by appointing him as prime minister. In the first few months of his presidency, Russia sent troops into neighboring Georgia to support rebels in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

GEOGRAPHY



Based upon geologic structure and relief, Russia can be divided into a western and eastern part along the path of the Yenisey River. The maximum east-west extent of Russia is approximately 5,600 miles, while the north-south width is between 1,500 and 2,500 miles. Landforms and landscapes primarily occur in a series of broad latitudinal belts. In the north lie the arctic deserts, and toward the south are the tundra and forest zones. South of the forest zone is the wooded steppe zone and the steppe zone, with a semi-desert section along the northern shore of the Caspian Sea.

Total area of land covered with permafrost is 4 million square miles. In the western part of the country, permafrost occurs in the tundra and forest-tundra zones, and along the Yenisey River in western Siberia. This part of the country consists of lowland plains, low hills and plateaus. Most of the area east of the Yenisey River is covered with permafrost and the terrain is mainly mountainous, save some extensive lowlands.

Russia has five main drainage basins: the Arctic and Pacific Oceans and the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas. The Arctic basin covers most of Siberia and the northern parts of the Russian Plain. Three rivers account for a large portion of this basin. The Ob River, in addition to its main tributary, the Irtysh, has a continuous length of 3,362 miles. The second river is the Yenisey with a length of 2,540 miles, and the Lena River has a length of 2,734 miles. The remaining rivers that drain into the Arctic Basin are the Northern Dvina and its tributaries, the Vychegda and Sukhona, the Pechora, the Indigirka and the Kolyma. The last two rivers are located in Siberia.

The rest of Siberia is drained into the Pacific. Many small rivers in the north flow from the mountains, while in the south, the Amur River forms the boundary dividing Russia and China. The river is 1,755 miles long, and one of its tributaries, the Ussuri forms part of the border. The rivers Dnieper and the Don both drain into the Black Sea. In addition, a small northwestern section drains into the Baltic. The Volga, with a length of 2,193 miles, is the longest river in Europe and the Volga System carries two-thirds of the waterway traffic. Its source is at the Valdai Hills northwest of Moscow and it drains into the Caspian Sea.

Russia has over two million fresh and saltwater lakes. The largest lakes in the western part of the country are the Ladoga with a surface area of 6,830 square miles, and Onega with a surface area of 3,753 square miles. The Peipus has an area of 1,370 square miles and Rybinsk Reservoir on the Volga. Narrow dam lakes are found behind the rivers Don, Volga, and Kama and are between 100 and 200 miles in length. A man-made lake found in Siberia is the Bratsk Reservoir, which is 340 miles long and is among the world's largest reservoirs. Lake Baikal is the largest body of fresh water in the world with a surface area of 12,200 square miles and a maximum depth of 5,315 feet.

CLIMATE

Russia has a largely continental climate due to its massive size. Most regions experience six months of continuous snow. Consequently, no part of the country has a year-round growing season. In the northern arctic and sub-arctic zones, the average winter temperature is negative 58 °F. By complete contrast, in the south and the Caucasus, summer temperatures can reach 110 °F. Western Russia has a typical continental climate of hot summers that reaches 86 °F and cold winters that can be negative 13 °F. The Russian year is clearly divided into four seasons that sharply differ from each other: winter, spring, summer and fall.



xml.latimes.com

The winter months of December, January and February have frosts, ice and snowstorms. During this season, white snow and ice blanket the earth. The winter is particularly longer in the north where the land is washed by the Arctic Ocean. Much of this region is almost perpetually ice-bound. Average days of snow cover vary from 60 to 80 days in the South and from 260 to 280 days in the Far North. The Far East experiences permafrost during most of the winter. For this reason, buildings must be constructed on pilings and machinery must be made of specially tempered steel. In the north, winter lasts seven to eight months of the year.

Spring begins in March and lasts through April and May. This is the time when the first flowers appear from under the snow; they are called snowdrops. The ice on the rivers begins to melt and break up, turning into rivulets of water that run along the streets in the towns and flow into the meadows and fields in the countryside.

Spring is followed by the summer months June, July and August. Everything blooms, thrives and bears fruit. Summer is hot in the south and relatively warm elsewhere. Average temperatures range from 55 to 75 °F. Drought often occurs in early, middle and late summer.

Fall is considered the most beautiful time of the year, called “golden autumn”, because the forest leaves turn golden red. Particularly beautiful are the maple trees, whose leaves acquire a golden and bright red tinge. In November, the trees shed their leaves leaving only their bare branches.

The ocean has little effect on the climate of Russia due to high mountains along the country’s southern border. Low to moderate amounts of precipitation is typical during the year. Rainfall is highest in the westerly mountain regions with an average annual precipitation of 79 inches. Average annual rainfall decreases toward the southeast. The wettest areas are the small, lush subtropical regions adjacent to the Caucasus and along the Pacific coast.

EDUCATION

During most of the Soviet period, the government tightly controlled the education system. Schools emphasized skill building and teaching of the Communist ideology, and teachers were expected to both educate students and shape their personalities to the Communist ideal. The students permitted to study a given profession were determined by official estimates of the number of graduates the profession will need. Private schools and publishing were prohibited by the Soviets.

In 1992, Russia adopted a new education law that legalized private schools and home schooling. This law also gave educators the right to choose their own textbooks and to determine other aspects of instruction. Private publishing has expanded rapidly, although new textbooks are still not widely available.

Russia has inherited a comprehensive system of education from the Soviet period and developed an extensive network of preschool, elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions. Children are required to attend school six days a week, Monday to Saturday. The school year begins in September and ends in May. It is divided into four terms, with vacations of up to two weeks between the terms. Preschool begins with children five years old and is optional. Education is required and free beginning at age 6, when children enter primary school for grades one to four. Intermediate education begins with grade five and continues through grade nine. Children can then enter upper-level schools or vocational-technical programs.

Undergraduate training in higher education institutions generally involves a four to five year course of study, after which students may enroll in a one to three year program of graduate training. Vocational schools consist of general education and technical training, as well as some on-the-job experience.

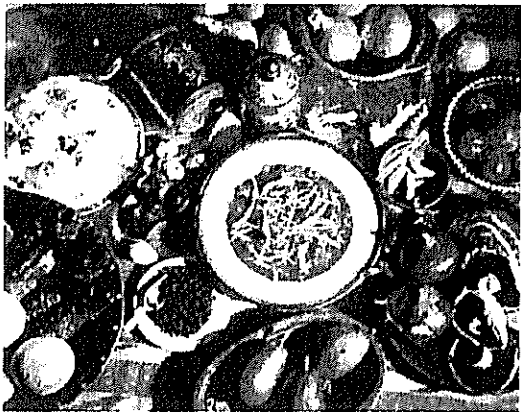
TRADITIONS

Russians enjoy participating in traditional customs and activities in all parts of life. Often, classical literature is celebrated through reciting of poetry, attending plays, and discussing novels. Traditionally, peasants sang epic songs that originated before the sixteenth century. Familiar folk instruments are the *balalaika*, a triangular guitar with three strings, and the *garmon* (concertina). A strong ballet tradition, beginning in 1738, exists among Russians and is patterned after the classical French style.

A common fairy tale typically tells the story of a prince or a simpleton as its hero. Animal tales feature animals that possess human characteristics. Traditional folk art displays intricate designs on objects. One of the most famous pieces is the *matryoshka*, which is a series of wooden dolls that nest inside each other.

Passage into adulthood is observed through graduation from high school or university. A patronymic is used in formal and business situations wherein the father's first name forms the root of the child's middle name.

At home, Russian dinner tables are laid out to include a plate of bread, salt, pepper and mustard. Russians generally eat three meals a day. The morning meal typically includes buckwheat pancakes, porridge served with sour cream and cheese, although some Russians eat only bread and tea for breakfast.



www.yoursa.com

Dinner is served in the afternoon and is the main meal of the day. It often begins with soup, which is made from beets and served with sour cream. It may also begin with appetizers such as salted fish, cold meats, hard-boiled eggs and caviar. The main course is served hot and typically made with beef, pork or chicken. Popular dishes include meat or vegetable-filled pasta accompanied by sour cream, and cubed or sliced beef in a sour cream sauce over noodles. The evening meal usually consists only of tea and appetizers. In addition to tea, coffee and seltzer are popular beverages, and vodka and beer are extremely popular alcoholic drinks.

Pie is another traditional Russian national dish. Russian pies are typically small and elongated. They are filled with various ingredients such as cabbages, peas, turnips, carrots, potatoes, spring onions, mushrooms, meat and fish. The pies are then covered with leavened or unleavened pastry and baked in the oven.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

With an estimated population of 140,041,247, more than four-fifths are ethnic Russians. The remaining population is made-up of over 120 ethnic groups, each of which speaks their own distinct language. The Tatars, Ukrainian, Chuvash, Bashkir, Chechen and Armenian groups have individually over one million members. Some of the groups give name to some of the administrative divisions within Russia. Groups that do not have autonomous ethnic units have been divided into territories and regions.

The Russian populace can be divided linguistically into four groups: Indo-European, Altaic, Uralic, and Caucasian. The Indo-European group includes the East Slavs and other smaller populations of speakers of different languages. The East Slavs comprise four-fifths of the total population. The majority of speakers in the Altaic group are the Turkic. They live primarily in the Central Asian republics.

Additional Turkic speaking clusters live in various regions throughout Russia. One such cluster, consisting of the Bashkir, Chuvash and Tatars, live between the middle Volga and southern Urals. A second cluster lives in the North Caucasus region and consists of the Balkar, Karachay, Kumyk and Nogay. Other Turkic-speaking groups are the Altai, Khakass, Shor, Tofalar, and Tuvans who live in southern Siberia between the Urals and Lake Baikal. The Sakha and Dolgan live primarily in the middle Lena Basin and the Arctic, respectively. The Manchu-Tungus and Mongolians are also part of the Altaic group.

The Uralic group, well distributed in the Eurasian forest and tundra zones, includes the Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic. Caucasian speakers live in the North Caucasus region and consist of many small groups, collectively called the Abkhazo-Adyghian and Nakho-Dagestanian group.



fostours.com

Lifestyles of the urban and village populations in Russia differ sharply and are greatly dependant on their income levels. For Russia's poor, life is a daily grind of survival. Many people spend hours each day selling their belongings or other goods on the street. The clothes worn by urban folk are of international style. Men usually wear European style jackets, trousers, shirts and ties. Women wear dresses or blouses with skirts or slacks. In the city, work schedule determines daily routine.

On workdays, household chores are accomplished when time permits, thus, most are done during the weekend. The norm in Russia is a five-day workweek with two days off, usually Saturday and Sunday. One of the days off is devoted to household affairs and the other is usually spent on entertainment such as walks in a local park, or visits to the cinema, theater, museum, family, or friends. In the summer, urban Russians usually try to go on vacation to enjoy the warmth of the northern sun and admire Russia's flowers, green forests and meadows.

Life is quite different in the rural areas of Russia. Village life revolves around agricultural seasons. Daily work includes sowing and harvesting, grazing of cattle, plowing, haymaking, hunting and collecting fruits. During the winter months, Russians rest after the hard work done in the fall. Summertime is enjoyed by the villagers through swimming in local rivers or lakes, or going mushroom and berry picking in the forests.



www.arizonahandbook.com

The Russian extended family in its fullest development consists of the eldest male, his wife, his unmarried daughters, his sons, their wives and children, the widow of any deceased male member and her descendants, as well as others who may have been adopted.

The eldest male member or family patriarch provides leadership for a Russian family, but does not exercise his rule in any consistent fashion. He is very detached from family life, spending time in studies and social clubs. He intervenes in whatever specific family issue that interests him. The eldest male member is expected to look after the welfare of the household members. His position of authority requires loyalty and obedience, regardless of whether he meets or avoids his responsibilities.

Women are generally considered inferior to men and are expected to be submissive to their husbands. At the same time, women tend to be idealized by both their husbands and children, and they exert considerable authority in their families. Households in which the father has died or failed in his responsibilities, the mother usually assumes his role.

RELIGION



www.iexplorer.com

The most commonly practiced religion is Russian Orthodox Christianity. About one-fourth of the population belongs to the Russian Orthodox Church and members are dispersed throughout the country. However, the vast majority of Orthodox believers do not attend church on a regular basis. Nonetheless, the church is widely respected by both Russian believers and nonbelievers, who see it as a symbol of Russian heritage and culture. The state officially observes Orthodox holidays.

Muslims form the second largest religious group in Russia. They are concentrated mostly in the ethnic republics of Chuvashia and Bashkortostan in the middle Volga region, and in the republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Alania, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Dagestan. Buddhists live chiefly in the republic of Buryatia and Tyva on the Russian border with Mongolia and in Kalmykia on the northwest shore of the Caspian Sea.

Despite the re-emergence of traditional religions, most Russians do not adhere strictly to a single belief. Instead, they combine traditional faiths with alternative beliefs. Witchcraft and astrology are popular, especially among young people. Russians have also turned to numerous new beliefs, sects and religious denominations. Foreign missionaries and other proselytizers have introduced a wide variety of religious beliefs and New Age philosophies.

HOLIDAYS

On certain popular holidays, the singing of ditties called *chastushkas* is a prominent feature of Russian country festivals and parties. In certain parts of rural Russia they still remain popular. A *chastushka* is a verse of four lines sung in a dance rhythm to the accompaniment of the *balalaika*. The song is usually a humorous improvisation on recent local news, in which two performers compete with each other to the general merriment and encouraging applause of the listeners. Both men and woman participate.

New Year is celebrated with much vigor in Russia. Many celebrate it twice a year on January 1 and 14. The second date corresponds to January 1 in the Julian calendar. The celebration includes a brightly decorated Christmas tree and the exchanging of New Year gifts followed by a hearty dinner. According to tradition, an abundant meal signifies an abundant New Year.

Another popular holiday, Butter Week, or Shrovetide in Russian, occurs the day before Ash Wednesday. Families sit down to a festive meal as it is traditionally the last opportunity to feast before the fasting period of Lent. The highlight of this holiday is the eating of *bliny* (pancakes), a symbol of Yarilo, the ancient pagan sun god. It is also a time to announce the coming of spring. June 12 is Russia's Independence Day. It commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation in 1991. Other popular holidays include Christmas, celebrated on January 7, and Easter.

ECONOMY

When Medvedev took office as president in 2008, he envisioned Russia strengthening its economy by improving its infrastructure, innovation, investment, and institutions. He worked toward decreasing the government's role in the economy, and he endeavored to reform the tax system and banking sector. Additionally, he sought to reduce corruption and improve the judiciary.

Since the financial crisis of 1998, Russia's economy has grown at an average rate of 7 percent. At the end of 2008, GDP growth was 6 percent, primarily driven by non-tradable services and domestic manufacturing. Over the turn of the century, the country experienced a time of declining poverty and unemployment, as well as an expansion of the middle class. In 1999, foreign exchange reserves were \$12 billion, and by the end of July 2008, it had grown to nearly \$600 billion. Total foreign debt is roughly one-third of GDP.

Due to the global financial crisis, investor concerns over the Georgian conflict and issues with corporate governance, the Russian stock market fell by approximately seventy percent. The crisis also affected the liquidity in the banking system. In early October 2008, the government injected \$200 billion into the economy. The rescue plan was aimed at increasing liquidity, helping firms refinance foreign debt, and supporting the stock market. There was also a \$20 billion tax cut plan for the populace and industries.

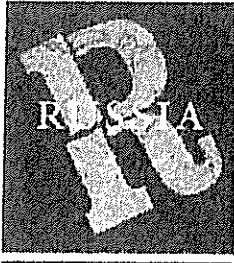
During the summer of 2008, the seventy percent drop in the price of oil had an adverse effect on the external accounts and the federal budget. By the middle of November, the Central Bank enacted mini-devaluations of the currency, causing an increase in capital flight and freezing of the domestic credit markets. This caused an increase in the unemployment rate while those who were working went without pay. There was also a severe decline in production. By the end of the year, the foreign exchange reserves were roughly \$435 billion.

To improve the economy, the government is taking strides toward diversifying and modernizing infrastructure. Domestic and foreign investments remain low due to the global financial crisis. The government has taken steps to improve the judiciary, but it has not been highly successful. In time, Russia aspires towards appointment to the World Trade Organization.

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SUGGESTED READING



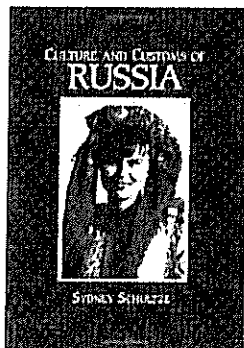
The Once and Future Empire
from Pre-History to Putin

Russia: The Once and Future Empire From Pre-History to Putin

By: Philip Longworth

Publisher: St. Martin's Press, 2006

This book answers many questions a reader might have about Russia as Longworth explores the rich history that Russia has experienced.



Culture and Customs of Russia (Culture and Customs of Europe)

By: Sydney Schultze

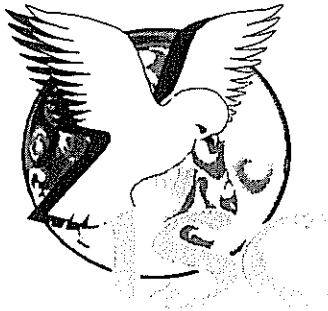
Publisher: Greenwood, 2008

The author provides a clear description of Russia's geography, history, religion, society, education, food and the arts. The book is an excellent introductory reference work.

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



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SOMALIA

Map:



www.cia.gov

Capital: Mogadishu

Time Difference: 8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 9,832,017 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Somali

Type of Government: Transitional federal government

Administrative Divisions: 18 regions

Total Area: 637,657 sq km (246,201 sq mi)

Area: Slightly smaller than Texas

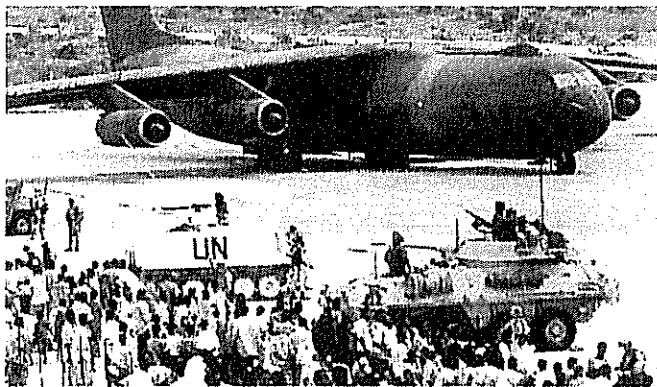
HISTORY

From the seventh to the tenth century, Arab and Persian trading posts were established along the coast of present-day Somalia. Nomadic tribes occupied the interior, occasionally pushing into Ethiopian territory. In the 16th century, Turkish rule extended to the northern coast and the Sultans of Zanzibar gained control in the south.

After British occupation of Aden in 1839, fishing along the coastline became Somali's source of food. The French established a coal mining station in 1862 at the site of Djibouti and the Italians planted a settlement in Eritrea. For a period, Egypt claimed Turkish rights in the area, and the British later succeeded the ownership. By 1920, a British protectorate and an Italian protectorate occupied what is now Somalia. The British ruled the entire area after 1941. In 1950, Italy returned to serve as United Nations trustee for its former territory.

By 1960, Britain and Italy granted independence to their respective sectors, enabling the two to join as the Republic of Somalia on July 1, 1960. Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Britain in 1963 when the British granted the Somali-populated Northern Frontier District of Kenya to the Republic of Kenya.

On October 15, 1969, President Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated and the army seized power, dissolving the legislature and arresting all government leaders. Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, as president of a renamed Somali Democratic Republic, leaned heavily toward the U.S.S.R. for support. In 1977, Somalia openly backed rebels in the easternmost area of Ethiopia, the Ogaden Desert, which had been seized by Ethiopia at the turn of the century. Somalia acknowledged defeat in an eight-month war against the Ethiopians that year, having lost much of its 32,000-man army and most of its tanks and planes. President Siad Barre fled the country in late January 1991. His departure left Somalia in the hands of a number of clan-based guerrilla groups, none of which trusted each other. A breakaway nation, the Somaliland Republic, proclaimed its independence.



www.waidev2.com

Africa's worst drought occurred in 1992. Coupled with the devastation of civil war, Somalia was plunged into a severe famine. An estimated one-third of the population was in danger of dying from starvation. U.S. troops were sent in to protect the delivery of food in December of 1992. In May, the United Nations took control of the relief efforts from the U.S. The warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid ambushed U.N. troops and dragged American bodies through the

streets, causing an about-face in America's willingness to involve itself in the fate of this anarchic country. Peace talks in Kenya appeared to be moving slowly but steadily toward an agreement on an interim government, at least in principle, when on March 23, 1994, they collapsed. The last of the U.S. troops left in late March, leaving 19,000 U.N. troops behind.

For several years after 1991, Somalia was engulfed in anarchy and peace negotiations between the various factions proved fruitless. Over this period, several warlords began to set up their own ministates – Colonel Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed became president of breakaway Puntland and Mohamed “General Morgan” Said Hersi set up Jubaland in the fall of 1998.

In August 2000, a parliament convened in nearby Djibouti and elected a new president, Abdulkassim Salat Hassana. While neighboring countries were quick to recognize the new government – the first in nearly a decade – some Somali warlords operating out of Mogadishu, as well as the leaders of the breakaway regions of Somaliland and Puntland, opposed the parliament. The government only controlled ten percent of the country after its first year, and its tenure expired in August 2003.

A 275-member transitional parliament selected Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as president. Due to violence and instability, the government spent its first year of operation in Kenya. It later settled in the provincial town of Baidoa. The government was unsuccessful in peace negotiations with the Somali Islamic Courts Council that seized control of Mogadishu and much of the South in June 2006. However, with the assistance of the Ethiopian army, the government regained control of Mogadishu and the Islamist militia fled the country. The U.S. launched air strikes on the fleeing militia in January 2007, causing criticism by a number of Muslim countries.

In March, fighting intensified between the insurgents and Somali and Ethiopian troops. Later in October, Nur Hassan Hussein replaced Ali Muhammed Ghedi as prime minister after a prolonged dispute with the president. In June 2008, the government and the Allegiance for the Reliberation of Somalia agreed upon a cease-fire. When violence erupted in the North in October, the government blamed the militant Islamic group Shabab.

President Yusuf relieved Prime Minister Hussein of his position in December 2008 citing that he did not accomplish his duties. Even though Parliament passed a vote of confidence the following day in his favor, President Yusuf appointed Muhammad Mahmud Guled Gamadhare as prime minister. However, Guled resigned, as he did not want to be an obstacle to the peace process. In the ongoing power struggle, the president resigned too. Ethiopia began withdrawing troops in January 2009 amid a growing threat from militant Islamists.



President Sharif: www.daylife.com

The Parliament then elected a moderate Islamist cleric, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed on January 31, 2009 as president. Somalis see his election as an opportunity to end the war and usher in peace.



VP Sharmarke: www.daylife.com

Parliament approved Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as prime minister after the president nominated him in February. Sharmarke is a former diplomat and the son of Somalia's second civilian president.

GEOGRAPHY

Somalia is mostly flat, but rises through the undulating Savannah of the hills in the north. The Gulf of Aden bounds it on the north and the Indian Ocean to the east and south. Its neighboring countries are Ethiopia to the west, Kenya to the southwest, and Djibouti to the northwest. The desert plains' northern zone rises up to the Ogo and Migiurtinia mountains, with Surud Ad being the highest peak at a height of 7,900 feet. The Ogo Plateau extends south from the mountains into the grazing pastures of the Haud Plateau.



www.sunfirecooking.com

In the south, the sandy and arid coastal plains lead to the Shebeli-Juba lowlands and plateau. The landscape changes from mountains in the north, passes through savannah plains and extends down to the sub-tropical region of the south. The south is largely a rugged plateau. The extensive southern coastal plain, which has many sandy dunes, borders the Indian Ocean. There are 1,880 miles of coastline in Somalia.

All Somalia's major rivers flow into the Indian Ocean. The main rivers are the Juba and Webi Shebeli rivers, which flow south through Somalia from Ethiopia. The two largest northern streams, both of which are seasonal, are the Daror and the Nugaaleed.

CLIMATE

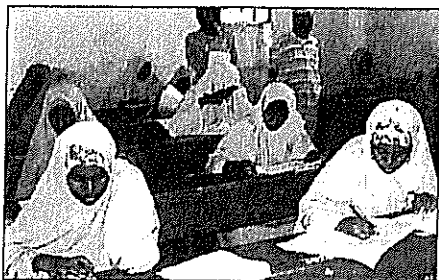
Somalia experiences four seasons: two rainy and two dry seasons. The first rainy season is called the *gu*, which occurs over the months of April and June. This is followed by period of drought, named *hagaa*, which lasts until September. The next season, between October and November, is a period of rain called *day*. Finally, the dry season of *jiilaal* is the most severe period for pastoralists and occurs between December and March.

Annual rainfall in Somalia is less than 20 inches and typically falls as showers or localized torrential rains. Annual rainfall in the north of the country can range as little as 2 inches to 6 inches. Some regions of higher elevation in the north, and some areas in the south, do record levels greater than 20 inches. The southwest region gets between 13 and 20 inches.

With the exception of areas of higher elevations and those along the coast, the mean daily maximum temperatures range between 86°F and 104°C, while the minimum temperatures range between 68°C and over 86°F. The northern region has the greatest temperature extremes, with the highlands experiencing temperatures of below freezing in December and the coastal plain experiencing temperatures exceeding 113°F in July. In the south, temperatures range between 68°F and 104°F.

EDUCATION

Before the civil war of 1990, education was free and compulsory. A comprehensive government program was able to raise the literacy rate from about five percent in 1970 to sixty percent in the mid-1980s. At this time, elementary schools numbered nearly 300,000 pupils, and there were good secondary schools and vocational institutions. The war collapsed the educational system and caused schools to close.



newsimg.bbc.co.uk

During the year 2004, UNICEF listed Somalia as the country with the lowest primary school enrolment rates in the world. At this time, there were only 1,172 schools in operation with a total student enrolment of over 284,574. The statistic only represents 19.9 percent gross enrolment ratio. At the lower primary school levels, only 37 percent of pupils are girls. It is the same case for female teachers, as they only represented 13 percent of the total number of teachers.

Since there is no central government in the country, Community Education Committees have taken the role of providing education. As of 2005, 90 percent of schools in the country are associated with a committee. These committees financially manage schools, track children who do not attend school, and connect with parents. They also host visible and effective forums for national renewal.

TRADITIONS

The Somali culture originates from the Islamic tradition. Between the ages of seven and nine, female children start wearing the *hijab*, a dress that covers the entire body except for the hands and face. When eating meals, men are served first and the women and children eat later. A person does not eat food using the left hand because Muslims consider the left hand to be unclean. To welcome visitors, Somalis offer a milky tea and burn incense. Men of the same clan share long handshakes while women informally greet each other. Members from different clan do not shake hands or exchange intimacies.

A number of Islamic practices have influenced Somali tradition. For example, a Somali wife mourns her husband's death in seclusion at home for four months and ten days. Islamic poetry has made a lasting impact on Somalia, which is widely known as a nation of poets. Therefore, oral traditions of poetry and storytelling have passed down through generations. One practice not associated with the Islamic tradition is that of female circumcision, a custom that came originally from Egypt.

Somalis celebrate weddings, births, circumcisions, and Islamic and secular holidays by preparing food for guests, and often invite the poor. Keeping with Islamic tradition, Muslim Somalis do not eat pork or drink alcohol. A common social pastime is the use of *qaat* (khat) or *miraa*, a stimulant leaf.

For nomads and farmers, food is usually prepared over a wood or charcoal fire outdoors or in a communal cooking hut. A major source of food for the nomads is milk from their livestock. Aging camels are a source of meat. Nomads consider the hump of the camel a delicacy. Other meat sources are sheep and goat; however, people eat meat a few times in a month. Additional food staples for nomads are honey, sorghum, dates, rice and tea. In southern Somalia, farmers grow corn, beans, sorghum, millet, squash, vegetables and fruits. The most popular bread, prepared in a flat shape from ground corn flour, is called *muufo*.

Food is seasoned with butter and ghee that is skimmed from melted butter. Sugar, sorghum or honey is used to sweeten food. Former Italian occupation in the South left a long-lasting influence on Somalis living in the region, as pasta and marinara sauce are another local favorite. Generally, Somalis do not like to eat fish. Restaurants are popular in cities, but it was not until the late 1990s that women begun frequently dining out with men.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

Somali is the common language amongst the people. All Somalis, including those living in neighboring countries, consider themselves one people. Thus, Somalis are one of Africa's largest ethnic groups. Furthermore, society is based on a clan-family structure. Three-quarters of the population consider themselves Samaal, who along with the Saab, are the two largest clan groups. The Samaal believe that they are superior over the Saab. The Samaal are divided into the Dir, Daarood, Isaaq, and Hawiye clan-families, while the Saab is divided into the Digil and Rahanwayn clan-families. The rest of the population is made of Bantu people and non-Somali.

The Saab clan-family developed a caste system that determines a group members' status according to his or her heritage or occupation. The Digil and Rahawiin clans retain much of the historic nomadic, pastoral culture primarily centered on camels with a few cattle and goats in the more productive areas. The agricultural setting of the Lower Jubba has modified the culture. The Gosha or Oromo people conduct most of the agriculture, but it has affected the Somali culture. Many are involved in trade with Swahili or Arab communities on the Indian Ocean coast.

Traditionally, Samaal clan men and older boys watch over the camels and cattle, while girls and young boys watch over the sheep and goats. Women care for the children, perform household duties and have the expectation that they are to submit to men. *Aqal*, a traditional dome-shaped nomadic shelter, is a collapsible hut made from poles and covered by hides, woven fiber mats, or cloth or tin. In urban areas, people live in Arab-style whitewashed stone or brick houses that are covered with plaster or cement. Wealthier people live in Western-style houses. Dwellings in most of the country do not have electricity and running water.

Marriage is both a bond between a man and a woman and between clans and families. Until recently, most marriages were arranged. A man can have up to four wives under Islamic law and polygamy is widely practiced. Divorce is easy and common, but is an option only for the men. In case of a divorce, the children are divided by gender, boys remain with the father and girls remain with the mother. Inheritance is passed from father to son, and under Islamic law, daughters are required to inherit half of what a son would inherit.

RELIGION

Islam became a dominant religion in the 1400's (Some historians say it may have entered as early as the 1200's). Present-day Somalis are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi'ite rite. They are influenced by Sufi spiritualism that involves chanting, whirling, chewing qaat, and communicating with Allah through trances. Commitment to Islam has led to the development of legendary claims of lineage in the Arabian Peninsula, but these claims are not supported by linguistic evidence and other oral traditions.

A person can find mosques in populated areas; men and women frequent the mosques to study the Qur'an and pray in separate rooms. Nomads worship where they are located, with a respected male leader or religious devotee elected to lead prayer and perform sacrifices.

HOLIDAYS

Religious festivals are important in Somali life, particularly the festivals of Id al Fitr and Id al Adha. Id al Fitr marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. After waking up around 8am, families get dressed to visit their friends and neighbors. The children, in new clothes, receive gifts or money at each house. Everyone who can possibly afford it donates money to the poor, and at midday, there is a special feast. Id al Adha commemorates a sacrifice of Abraham. As with Id al Fitr, children particularly enjoy the day. Amusement parks are set up and shops have special displays of clothes, toys and sweets. Those who can afford it sacrifice an animal and give it to the poor.

Other national holidays include June 26, which celebrates the North's independence, and July 1, the anniversary of the day the south gained independence and the eventual uniting of the two former colonies.

ECONOMY

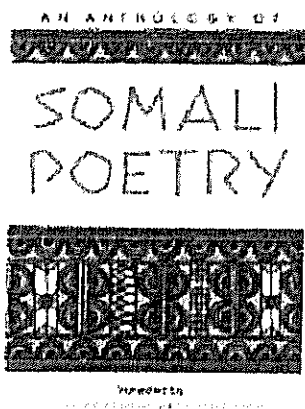
Somalia has depended upon the sale of livestock, remittance from Somalis living and working in other countries, and telecommunications to maintain an informal economy. The most important sector is agriculture, which totals 40 percent of GDP and accounts for roughly 65 percent of export earnings. Other exports are livestock, hides, fish, charcoal, and bananas. Imported goods are sugar, sorghum, corn, gat and machined goods. The country enjoys the lowest international call rates on the continent and wireless services provided by telecommunication firms.

The lack of a formal banking sector has caused the establishment of numerous money exchange services. Piracy has become a source of revenue for some Somalis who utilize boats, weaponry and high-tech communications gear to capture seafaring vessels in locations such as Asia's Strait of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden. The pirates hold the vessels for ransom and only release them when they receive the payment. In an attempt to reduce the occurrences piracy, various countries have begun patrolling these waters.

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SUGGESTED READING

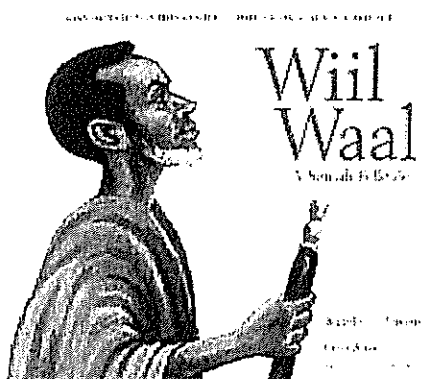


An Anthology of Somali Poetry

By: B. W. Andrzejewski, Sheila Andrzejewski

Publisher: Indiana University Press, 1993

This book translates into English the universal Somali poetry. Somalia has been known as “a nation of poets” and the authors provide the works of different Somali poets. Examples of additional things that the book covers are the oral and written medium and pronunciation of Somali words.



Wiil Wall: A Somali Folktale

By: Kathleen Moriarty

Publisher: Minnesota Humanities Center, 2007

Wiil Waal, a Somali leader in one of the provinces, asks the men residing there to bring him a part of a sheep that can at once divide and unite men. Most of them bring him prime cuts of meat, but a poor man listens to his daughter’s idea that has a surprising result.

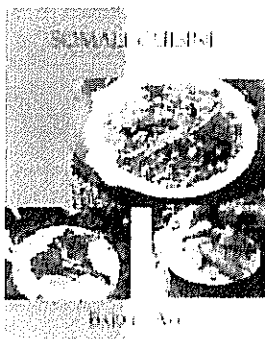


Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl

By: Virginia Lee Barnes, Janice Boddy

Publisher: Random House, Incorporated 1995

An extraordinary first-person account of a young woman's coming of age in Somalia during the 1950s and 1960s. Aman is an instantly recognizable story of a girl who struggles against the obligations and structures of family and society. Aman gives a portrait of herself as fiercely devoted to her family and culture yet searching for a better life.



Somali Cuisine

By: Barlin Ali

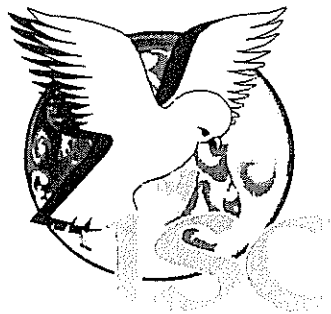
Publisher: AuthorHouse, 2007

Writing about different recipes, Ali introduces the reader to Somali's traditional way of preparing and cooking food. Over many generations, Somali women have passed down these recipes both orally and practically. Therefore, the reader will additionally get a glimpse of female history demonstrated through the way of living. Ali has been able write recipes that can be used in both a traditional kitchen setting and in a modern American kitchen.

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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UKRAINE

Map:



Capital: Kyiv (Kiev)

Time Difference: 7 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 45,700,395 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Ukrainian

Type of Government: Republic

Administrative Divisions: 24 provinces, 1 autonomous republic, and 2 municipalities with oblast status

Total Area: 603,700 sq km (233,090 sq mi)

Area: Slightly smaller than Texas

HISTORY

From the fourth to the 7th century, the Antes tribal federation was the first definite Slavic community to live in the area presently known as Ukraine. Ukrainians can trace their lineage to Neolithic agricultural tribes in the Dnieper and Dniester Valleys. In the 7th century, the Slavs lived under the rule of the Khazars Empire. This rule lasted until the 9th century when the Varangians from Scandinavia created a dynasty in Kiev. Thus, when the Slavs were united as the Kievan Rus, the land and people of Ukraine defined its core.

Kievan Rus later divided into various principalities, and in the 13th century, was conquered by the Mongols. Lithuania expanded eastward and southward, resulting in the displacement of the Tatars living in Ukraine. In 1386, Lithuania and Poland united and continued the Polish expansion into Ukraine. 1569 marked the beginning of Polish rule after the organic union of Poland and Lithuania.

The general usage of the term Ukraine occurred during the 16th century. The literal translation of the word means “at the border” or “borderland.” To the north of the Ukrainian border, both Poland-Lithuania and the principality of Moscow were competing for control of the area. Ukrainians, escaping serfdom and religious persecution under Polish rule, formed a military order known as the Zaporizhzhya Sich, which was later called the Cossacks. They then revolted against Polish domination in 1648, with their leader Hetman Bohdan Chmielnicki. Chmielnicki realized the need to strengthen and signed the Treaty of Pereyaslavl with Moscow.

Although the two parties agreed that Ukraine was to remain largely independent, Russia began to go against the commitment. In an attempt to remove itself from Russian protection, Ukraine signed a treaty with Poland in 1658, which led to the Russo-Polish war. The war lasted until 1667 when the Treaty of Andrusov was signed. Ukraine was divided into two; Russia acquired the land east of the Dnieper River and Kiev, while Poland acquired the land west of the Dnieper River.

The Northern War against Russia ensued when the president of the Cossack state, Hetman Ivan Mazepa, united with Sweden. However, the 1709 defeat at Poltava by Czar Peter I further prevented any attempts of creating an independent Ukraine. In 1764, Empress Catherine II made the last of the Hetmans resign, and later, Ukraine was divided into three provinces. Russia gained control of Podolia and Volhynia through the Polish partition treaties of 1772, 1793, and 1795; and Austria acquired East Galicia.

Despite a ban on the usage of the Ukrainian language, the late 19th century saw a movement for Ukrainian national and cultural revival. Additionally, Ukrainians wanted to unite under a single state. In 1917, after the overthrowing of the czarist regime, a Ukrainian central council emerged, presided over by Mikhailo Hrushevsky. In June of that year, it formed a government led by Vladimir Vinnichenko as prime minister and Simon Petlura as war minister. At that time, Ukraine operated as a republic under the framework of a federated Russia. In January 1918, after the Bolshevik Revolution, Ukraine gained complete independence.

For a period, Soviet troops occupied Ukraine. The Central Powers then sent their own soldiers to the area, leading to a withdrawal of the Soviet Troops after the signing of the March 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Later in November of that year, the Central Powers were mandated to withdraw from Ukraine after the World War I cease-fire. Following the collapse of Austria-Hungary, an independent republic in West Ukraine was pronounced. Although the two parts of Ukraine announced their merger in January 1919, Soviet troops continued to occupy Kiev. Ultimately, in 1922, Ukraine became one of the original constituent republics of the USSR.

During World War II, many Ukrainians became anti-German guerrilla fighters after facing the Nazis' strict occupation and disrespect for all Slavs. The Nazis killed many of Ukraine's Jews during the war. In all of the Soviet republics, Russification took place. However, Ukrainian nationalism endured in Ukraine. Later in 1960s, Ukrainians became unstated partners with the Russians in governing the Soviet Union. In 1986, Ukraine was faced with the explosion of one of the Chernobyl nuclear power station reactors.

Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991, and in December, joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Ukraine's first president was Leonid Kravchuk, who was a former Communist turned nationalist. He was later defeated by the ruling Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma during the 1994 parliamentary and presidential elections. Kuchma made certain market reforms, but the country still had inefficient state-run companies. By engaging in economic reforms and nuclear arsenal disarmament, Ukraine managed to receive Western aid and loans.

Kuchma won reelection as president in 1999, and he chose Viktor Yushchenko to serve as prime minister. Presidential powers over parliament were increased through a voter referendum in April 2000. However, Kuchma became embroiled in a scandal involving the murder of an opposition journalist. The government did not investigate the murder and was accused of controlling media coverage.

Parliament further dismissed Yushchenko from his post as prime minister in April 2001. His replacement, Anatoliy Kinakh, only lasted until November 2002, when Kuchma replaced him with Viktor Yanukovych. Under a Ukrainian supreme court ruling in December 2003, Kuchma was authorized to run for a third term as the courts cited that his first term took place before the passing of the current constitution. Nevertheless, he lacked the respect of the public.



The following years were marred in political turmoil. The "Orange Revolution" events took place during the 2004 presidential election. Yushchenko emerged as the narrow winner of the October vote, after surviving a poisoning attack by an unknown person during the campaign. He campaigned on the need for Ukraine to establish closer ties with the European Union. The result of the election was a run-off with Yanukovych who aimed to build closer ties with Russia.

Supporters of Yushchenko demonstrated in city streets of West Ukraine. Yet, the second round of voting in November resulted in Yanukovych as the winner. Both elections were deemed undemocratic by most observers, and the Supreme Court sanctioned a new run-off in December.

Yushchenko was the outright winner of the third reelection, but due to legal challenges, the results were not finalized until the middle of January 2005. Yushchenko then appointed Yulia V. Tymoshenko as prime minister in February. After being accused of allowing the existence of corruption in the government and being in conflict with the cabinet, Yushchenko forced her resignation in less than seven months of her term. Yuriy Yekhanurov, a moderate economist, was selected as the next prime minister. In late 2005 and early 2006, Gazprom, a major supplier of Ukrainian natural gas, halted their supply as their increased prices would not satisfy Ukraine.

After the parliamentary elections in March 2006, Our Ukraine, the Tymoshenko bloc, and the Socialist Party formed a coalition government. However, this government only endured until July when the Socialists united with the Party of the Regions and the Communists. Altogether, the three parties elected Yanukovych as prime minister. Though Yushchenko did not recognize the new coalition, he later signed a unity pact with Yanukovych. Thus, Yanukovych became prime minister in August after Our Ukraine joined the coalition of the three parties. In time, however, Our Ukraine left the coalition to join the opposition.

The ongoing struggle between the prime minister and president resulted in Yushchenko's dissolution of the parliament and the demanding of new elections. These events followed deputies aligned with him joining Yanukovych's coalition. In the September 2007 elections, the president's and Tymoshenko's bloc together narrowly won a majority in the new parliament. In December, the two blocs formed a coalition government and Tymoshenko was selected prime minister. In the ensuing months, supporters of the two groups stood at odds with each other in parliament. Additionally, the government's desire to join NATO has faced opposition from both the Party of Regions and Russia.

GEOGRAPHY

Ukraine lies in the southwestern portion of the Russian Plain. Belarus borders it to the north, Russia to the east, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea to the south, Moldova and Romania to the southwest, and Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland to the west.

The predominant terrain is level plains that average 574 feet above sea level. Highlands form a continuous northwest to southwest belt, dividing the plains. The largest highland area is the Dnieper Upland, located in the central western area of the country between the middle reaches of the Dnieper and Southern Buh rivers. In the west is the Volyn-Podilsk Upland, whose highest point is Mount Kamula, peaking at 1,545 feet.

Farther to the west, the parallel ranges of the Carpathian Mountains extend for over 150 miles. Mountainous regions comprise 5 percent of the total land area and occur along the borderline. The country's highest point is Mount Hoverla at 6,762 feet. The Crimean Mountains form the southern coast of the Crimean Peninsula that extends into the Black Sea.

There also exist low-lying areas in Ukraine. The Pripet Marshes, crossed by many river valleys, lie in the north of the country. In the eastern and central region of the country, the Dnieper Lowland is flat in the west and becomes gently rolling in the east. The Black Sea Lowland runs along the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of the Azov. It is called the North Crimean Lowland once it crosses into the Crimean Peninsula.

Nearly all of the major rivers flow northwest to southeast into the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The rivers are an important source of water, and a series of canals have been built to fulfill this purpose. The longest river is Dnieper, with 609 miles of its total length located in the country. The Southern Buh and its main tributary, the Inhul, flow into the Black Sea. Other rivers are the Dniester, Donets and Danube. All of the large rivers have dams and hydroelectric plants.

Natural lakes are few in number and are spread over the river floodplains. Lake Svityaz, with an area of 11 square miles, is one of the largest lakes and is located in the northwest of the country. Small saltwater lakes are located in the Black Sea Lowland and in the Crimea. Large saltwater lakes known as limans are located along the Black Sea coastline. There also exist artificial lakes in the form of small and large reservoirs. The Volyn-Podlsk, Dnieper, and Black Sea are important artesian basins used to meet the needs of municipalities and farmers.

CLIMATE

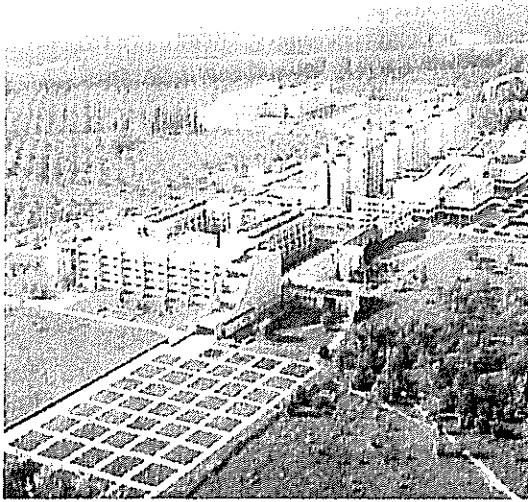
Ukraine is within a temperate climatic zone that is affected by moderately warm, humid air from the Atlantic Ocean. Along the southern shore of the Crimea, however, the residents experience a warm, gentle, Mediterranean-type climate. In this area, winters are mild and rainy, with minimal snowfall and an average January temperature of 39 °F. July temperatures average 75 °F, leaving the summers dry and hot. Overall, average annual temperatures for the country range from around 42-45 °F in the north to around 52-55 °F in the south.

Winters in the west are substantially milder than winters in the east. January is the coldest month, with temperatures averaging around 26 °F in the southwest and around 18 °F in the northeast. During the summer, the east experiences higher temperatures than the west. Whereas temperatures average around 73 °F in the southeast during July, they are as low as 64 °F in the northwest.



Most of the precipitation that the country experiences usually accumulates over the months of June and July, while February experiences the least accumulation. Snow usually falls in late November and early December. Western Ukraine accumulates more than 47 inches in annual precipitation. The lowlands along the Black Sea and in the Crimea accumulate less than 16 inches in annual precipitation. The rest of the country receives between 16 and 24 inches.

EDUCATION



www.univ.kiev.ua

European traditions in education left a great impact on education in Ukraine. Kyiv, the first school of higher education, was established in 1632. The founding of Collegium and Lviv University in 1661 followed it. Professors from Kyiv were among the most respected scholars of their time. Later during the 19th century, additional universities were created. Despite their centuries-long history in Ukraine, it was not until the 1920s that schools were able to teach using the Ukrainian language.

Ukraine was one of the most developed republics within the Soviet Union. Its economy required highly qualified specialists to fill positions throughout various industries. The large numbers of universities and institutes provided the necessary training.

Ukraine had only state-supported institutions during this period, as opposed to religiously affiliated institutions common in other countries. All institutions were required to be licensed by the Ministry of Education to qualify for the awarding of Diplomas and Certificates.

Two-thirds of all Ukrainian children attend pre-school programs. Children between the ages of 6 months and 3 years attend nursery school, while those between the ages 3 and 6 years are sent to kindergarten. Elementary education is from grades one through four. Secondary education is then separated into two parts: lower secondary from grades five through nine, and upper secondary from grades ten through eleven.

For the upper secondary education, a student is given the option of either joining a general academic school, a secondary vocational-technical school, or a specialized secondary school. Applicants to postsecondary institutions are expected to first complete their secondary education. Second, to pursue full-time studies, a student must be under the age of 35. However, there is no age restriction for students studying part-time or during the evenings. Third, they must pass a competitive entrance examination set by each institution. In addition, students can continue on to receive advanced degrees as a candidate of sciences or doctor of sciences.

TRADITIONS

Compared to the rest of Europe, the type of clothing worn in Ukraine is generally more formal. While in public spaces, Ukrainians prefer to show restraint and refrain from drawing attention. In the homes, there is the tradition of giving honored guests and travelers a loaf of bread and salt, as bread is a central part of the Ukrainian diet. Ukrainian music dates back to centuries-old oral traditions of epic narrative poems, *bylyny*, and long lyrical ballads, *dumas*, that praise the accomplishments of the Cossacks.



www.borschrecipe.info

Ukrainian food is well seasoned with rich spices. The dishes have a combination of fresh, pickled, and smoked ingredients. Bread is the mainstay of the Ukrainian diet, and therefore, Ukraine is known as the Breadbasket of Europe. Nevertheless, *borsch* is the national dish of the country. A type of soup, it is prepared in different ways by people living in various parts of the country. The ingredients used in traditional cooking rely on the seasons of the year.

Salads are a combination of fresh, cooked, and preserved vegetables prepared with meat, cheese or fish. People also either add vinegar or mayonnaise to their salad. *Varenyky* are dumplings that are either prepared from boiled or fried dough. To be eaten as an entrée, meat, potatoes, cabbage, and mushrooms are added to the dumpling dish. To make a dessert, sour cherries or sweetened cottage cheese and raisins are added as fillers into the dumplings. *Holubtsi* are cabbage rolls filled with meat and rice or buckwheat that is usually layered with a thin tomato sauce. A local speciality in Kiev is the *Kievsky Tort*. It is prepared as layers of crumbly raised wafers and hazelnuts and sold in its own special green box.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

During the years under the rule of the Soviet Union, there existed a policy of Russian immigration and Ukrainian emigration. From 1959 to 1991, the population of ethnic Ukrainians fell from 77 percent to 73 percent. The population began to increase after the country gained independence, and by the turn of the 21st century, ethnic Ukrainians were more than three-quarters of the total population. Russians are currently the largest minority, accounting for less than one-fifth of the population. The population also comprises of Belarusians, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, and Roma (Gypsies). Additionally, the Crimean Tatars are one of the largest non-Russian minority groups.

Large Jewish and Polish populations had in the past lived in Ukraine, mostly west of the Dnieper River. During the late 19th century, an estimated 10 million Jews lived in ethnic Ukrainian territory, which is slightly more than one-quarter of the world's Jewish population. Emigration and devastation of the Holocaust caused a decline in the Jewish population. After World War II, the majority of the large Polish population was resettled in Poland. This was part of the Soviet plan of having ethnic settlements match territorial boundaries. Furthermore, in 1944, the Crimean Tatars were forcibly deported to Uzbekistan and other Central Asian republics. In 1989, they began returning to the Crimea in large numbers.

The national language commonly spoken is Ukrainian. Russian is the most dominant minority language. The Ukrainian language is a form of the Cyrillic alphabet, and together with Russian and Belarusian, belongs to the East Slavic branch of the Slavic language family. While Ukrainian is closely related to Russian, it also has noticeable similarities to the Polish language. Many Ukrainians also speak Polish, Yidish, Rusyn, Belarusian, Romanian, Moldovan, Bulgarian, Crimean Turkish or Hungarian.

Under imperial Russia and Soviet Union rule, the spoken language among government administrators and the public was Russian. It was not until 1989 that Ukrainian once again became the official language and further ratified as the only official language by the 1996 Ukrainian Constitution. Within Ukraine, the Crimea has an autonomous status. Since the region has a Russian-speaking majority, the official language is Russian. Other areas with large Russian minorities, such as the Donets Basins, conduct all school instruction in Russian.



www.infoukes.com

More than half of the Ukrainian population lives in urban areas. The highly industrialized regions of the Donets Basin and Dnieper Bend make up more than one-third of the total urban population. Some areas of western Ukraine and Kiev are also densely populated. Other major cities are Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Odessa, Zaporizhzhya, Lviv, and Kryvyy Rih. In the rural areas, over half of the people reside in villages with populations ranging between 1,000 and 5,000. The forest-steppes have the highest rural population densities because of fertile soils for farming.

Many Ukrainians, especially the middle-aged and elderly, do not relocate throughout the country. Grandparents will assist in taking care of their grandchildren as their children work. Gender roles, both in public and in the home, are generally traditional. In the homes, women do the cooking and cleaning while the men perform house repairs. Among the younger generation, work at home is balanced between the two genders. Men demonstrate their politeness by holding doors for women. Women dress more femininely than in most of the western countries.

RELIGION

Prince Vladimir the Great of Kiev introduced Ukrainians to Orthodox Christianity in 988 AD. Prior to this time, Ukraine was a pagan nation of idol worshippers like most other European countries. At that time, Ukrainians were limited in their understanding of the Biblical scriptures. Although they did accept Christianity, they still practiced many of their pagan traditions; thus leading to a merging of the two traditions.

Presently, Ukrainian Orthodox Christianity is the main religion in the country. Seventy percent of Ukrainians state that they follow the faith. As translations into the Slavonic language increased, more people gained access to Biblical scripture and liturgy. Many people do own a Bible; however, they lack an understanding of the writings because they have not been explained the meaning of the passages. Additionally, Communist atheism has influenced Ukrainians into believing that people in other religions, rather than in Orthodox Christianity, easily find God.

Other major religions found in Ukraine are Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, Protestants and Jews. There are also a number of minority religious groups. The Orthodox Church is not as dominant in Ukraine as in other European countries. Ukraine therefore has religious stability and minor religious groups rarely undergo persecution.

HOLIDAYS

Ukrainians observe numerous holidays through the year, from government holidays to religious and social holidays. There are two types of holidays celebrated in Ukraine: state holidays wherein banks and government offices close, and other observed holidays. The first state holiday is New Year's Day, which is among one of the most favorite holidays. During this time, most of the businesses close from December 31 to January 8. This is followed by the Saint Christmas week that lasts from the 7th to the 14th. Orthodox Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January and is the second holiday. The third holiday is International Women's Day, celebrated on the 8th of March. Ukrainians also consider it to as the first Spring Holiday.

The fourth state holiday is the Orthodox Easter, which is celebrated two weeks after the Catholic Easter Holiday. Fifty days after Easter, the Holy Trinity Day is observed. This holiday marks the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. The sixth holiday, May 1st and 2nd, is Labor/May Day. During the holiday, events have evolved over time from a political stance with parades and speeches to a celebration of Nature. The seventh holiday is Victory Day on May 9. This is a day to remember World War II fighters. Constitution Day is the eighth holiday and it falls on June 28. This celebrates the adoption of the Constitution of Independent Ukraine in 1998. The last state holiday is Independence Day. This is the largest holiday and is celebrated on August 24.

In addition, other holidays that are observed include Ukrainian Unity Day on January 22, Europe Day during the third weekend of May, Day of Journalists on June 6, and Teacher's Day on October 5.

ECONOMY

After becoming a member state of the CIS in 1991, the Ukrainian Government reduced prices and established a legal framework for privatization. However, the reform efforts did not last because the government underwent a period of extensive resistance from people within the government and legislature. The resistance led to the government reverting on a number of its reform efforts. This led to a drastic decrease of the economic output by 40 percent in 1999 from the 1991 level.

As part of the former Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Republic ranked second after Russia in its importance to the Union's economic component. At that time, its production output was four times that of the next-ranking republic. Relying on the available fertile black soil, it was able to have an agricultural output that was a quarter of the total output in the Union. Farmers were able to supply large quantities of meat, milk, grain and vegetables to the other republics. The country's various industries also supplied industrial and mining sites to the other republics with unique equipment and raw materials.

Ukraine's economy is defenseless against external shocks due to its dependence on Russia for the supply of energy and lack of significant structural reform. Oil and natural gas imports account for approximately three-quarters of the country's annual energy needs. For a short period

during late 2005 and early 2006, gas supply to Ukraine was temporarily shut off after a disagreement with Russia over pricing. A deal was reached in January 2006, and Ukrainians were now required to pay double the price for Russian-supplied gas. Real GDP grew approximately 7 percent between 2006 and 2007 because of the high global steel prices and a strong domestic consumption that resulted from an increase in pensions and wages. Steel is Ukraine's top export. Although political turmoil continued between the prime minister and president until mid-2008, the economy remained upbeat.

The year 2008 marked a significant deceleration of economic growth as Ukraine and its trading partners succumbed to the global financial crisis. In November 2008, the International Monetary Fund agreed to make available to Ukraine a \$16.5 billion standby fund to help the country cope with the crisis. Internal political turmoil and deteriorating external conditions currently inhibit economic recovery, however, as the country endeavors to fight corruption, develop capital markets, and improve the legislative framework, Ukraine shows promise of improvement.

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SUGGESTED READING



Ukraine

By: Catherine W. Cooper, Zoran Pavlovic

Publisher: Chelsea House Publishers, 2006

Ukraine is a landlocked country that is known as the “breadbasket of Europe” because its fertile soil facilitates the growing of crops. The book describes the various physical landscapes found in the country. Ukraine’s history is also reviewed, along with the describing of the culture, politics, and economy. Cooper also writes about current lifestyles and how the country is progressing into the future.

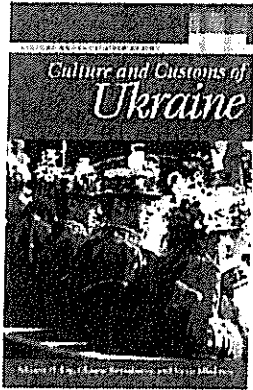


The Old Man's Mitten: A Traditional Tale

Retold By: Yevonne Pollock

Publisher: Mondo Publishing, 1994

The book is a version of a traditional cumulative Ukrainian tale. It is fun-filled and nicely illustrated, with the question being: “How many animals can fit in a mitten?”



Culture and Customs of Ukraine

By: Adriana Helbig, Oksana Buranbaeva, Vanja Mladineo

Publisher: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated, 2008

Ukraine is a cultural hotspot that acts as a crossroads between Europe and Asia. The authors provide a clear study of an evolving Ukrainian culture through observing past and present traditions and customs. The country's modern society is analyzed from multiple viewpoints such as looking at religious practices, gender issues, education policies, and performing arts.



The Magic Egg and Other Tales from Ukraine

Retold By: Barbara J. Suwyn

Publisher: Libraries Unlimited, 1997

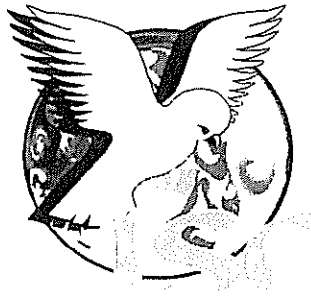
This book provides the reader with a glimpse into Ukraine's history and folk literature. It also contains 33 traditional tales featuring humorous animal tales, spooky tales, instructive fables, how and why stories, and heroic legends. Additionally, various elements from the stories such as Ukrainian landscape and folk arts are illustrated using color plates and line drawings.

VIETNAM

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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Harrisburg, PA 17101

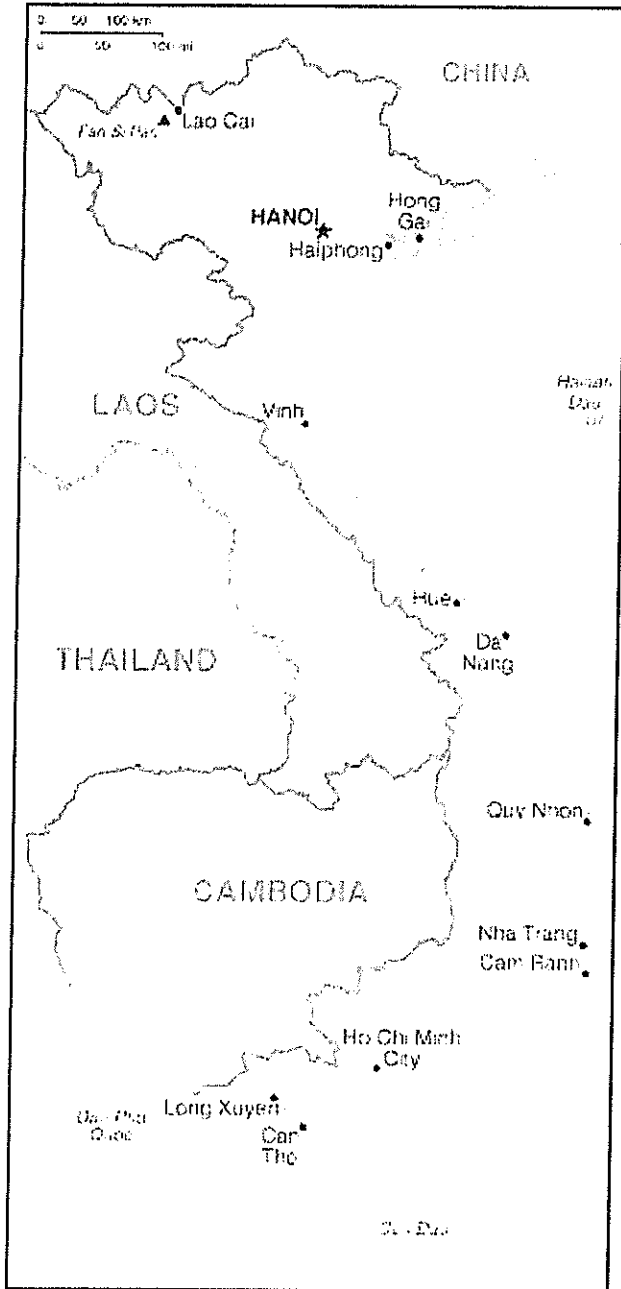
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VIETNAM

Map:



Capital: Hanoi

Time Difference: 12 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time

Population: 86,967,524 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Vietnamese

Type of Government: Communist state

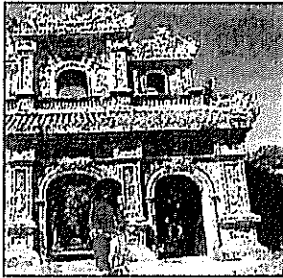
Administrative Divisions: 59 provinces

Total Area: 329,560 sq km (127,244 sq mi)

Area: Slightly larger than New Mexico

HISTORY

The Ch'in Empire was the first to rule over a united China in 221 BC. However, following the death of its founder, Shih Huang Ti, the Chinese commander in the south founded the kingdom of Nam Viet, which included the state of Au Lac. Later in 111 BC, Chinese armies under the Han Empire were able to conquer the kingdom and rule briefly over the local chieftains.



This method of ruling did not last long, as Chinese rulers began to assimilate Vietnam to its culture and politics. Assimilation took the form of replacing local practices with those of the Chinese. They brought in administrators from China to take the place of the nobility, with Confucianism being their official ideology. The Chinese language became the medium of official and literary expression. Chinese art, architecture, and music also influenced that of the Vietnamese people.

www.geographia.com

After the assimilation, there were periodic revolts by the Vietnamese. The revolt by the Trung sisters in AD 39 is the most famous. For a short time period, the older sister, Trung Trac, was successful in ruling over an independent state. Nevertheless, Chinese armies reconquered Vietnam in AD 43. However, these periodic revolts continued over a thousand years. In 939, Ngo Quyen and his Vietnamese forces were able to defeat Chinese occupation troops, leading to the establishment of an independent state. However, Ngo Quyen's death after a few years led to a period of infighting.

Emerging after this period was the Ly Dynasty, ruling Vietnam from 1010 to 1225. The rulers maintained many of the Chinese political and social institutions. Although the Chinese fashion and thought were popular with the upper classes, people kept on practicing native forms of expression and tradition. As an agricultural state, Vietnam depended economically on the cultivation of wet rice. It also was a major participant in regional trade of commercial and manufactured goods.

Vietnam became a dynamic force in Southeast Asia during the rule of the Ly Dynasty and that of its successor, the Tran Dynasty (1225-1400). During the 13th century, when the Mongol Dynasty was ruling, its army was able to defeat the armies of Kublai Khan from China. This prevented the Chinese from controlling the Red River Delta. To the south, the Kingdom of Champa located along the central coast was in continual conflict with Vietnam. This kingdom formed after the independence of Vietnam. The Cham armies invaded Vietnam numerous times, but overall, Vietnam was successful in driving Champa to the south. Eventually, the kingdom was destroyed in the 15th century through the capturing of the capital, Cham, present-day Da Nang. Late 17th century, Vietnam occupied the lower Mekong Delta after having defeated the Khmer Empire.

Up in the north, Le Loi became the first emperor of the Le Dynasty in 1428 after defeating the Ming Dynasty that conquered Vietnam in 1407. In the 16th century, two aristocratic clans

had the most power, the Trinh and the Nguyen. This led to the separation of Vietnam into two zones the Nguyen forming a federal state in the South and the Trinh in the North. The Le Dynasty was near collapse by the late 18th century. At this time, lords fought for control of rice fields. This led to a revolt by peasants headed by the Tay Son brothers. One of the brothers, Nguyen Hue, briefly restored Vietnam to united rule in 1789. He died shortly after coming to power, and Nguyen Anh, an heir to the Nguyen house, defeated the Tay Son armies. Nguyen Anh, as Emperor Gia Long, established a new dynasty in 1802.

Emperor Napoleon III had as his goal to make the Nguyen Dynasty to accept a French protectorate. The decision was made after the Dynasty persecuted and executed some Roman Catholic missionaries and their converts, because it was suspicious of French influence. Therefore, a naval expedition was sent out in 1858 after an unsuccessful first attack at Da Nang Harbor. Over time, a French protectorate was created, thus establishing colonial rule.

French rule ended in 1940 with the invasion of the Japanese who intended to place Vietnam under military occupation. After WWII, the Viet Minh, with the beliefs of moderate reform and national independence, declared the country's independence. The Viet Minh and the French fought in the French Indochina War. In 1954, France admitted defeat and the Geneva Accords left Vietnam divided into a Communist North and an anti-Communist south mainly sponsored by the U.S. The year 1964 saw the eruption of war.

The war involving armies from the U.S. and other countries continued for eight years. In 1973, the U.S. withdrew its troops after signing a cease-fire agreement. The North Vietnamese captured the southern capital of Saigon in 1975. Emigration from the country followed due to a period of political repression. In 1991, after the end of Communism and the Cold War, many western countries established diplomatic and trade relations with Vietnam. The U.S. was the last country to do so in 1995.

GEOGRAPHY

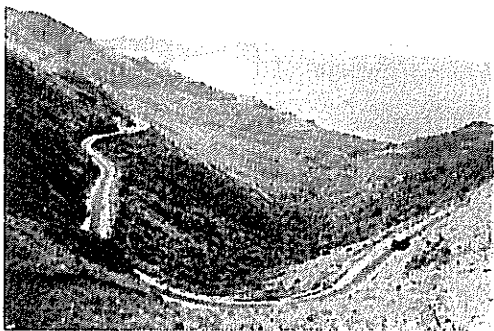
Vietnam is bounded to the north by China, to the west by Laos, to the southwest by Cambodia, and to the east by the South China Sea. Level land covers no more than 20 percent of the total area with the rest of the land consisting of tropical lowlands, hills and densely forested highlands.

The highlands and the Red River Delta dominate the north of the country. This delta covers a flat, triangular region of 1,158 square miles. Vietnam also has the Gai Truong Son (Central mountains) originating in the Tibet and Yunnan regions and forming the border with Laos and Cambodia. It is further divided into the coastal lowlands, and the Mekong River Delta in the south. Mekong Delta covers approximately 15,444 square miles in a low-level plain that is criss-crossed by a maze of canals and rivers.

The Red River ("Song Hong" in Vietnamese), is about 746 miles long. The Song Lo (Lo River, Riviere Claire, or the Clear River) and the Song Da (Black River or Riviere Noire) are the main tributaries. The Mekong is one of the 12 great rivers of the world. Having its source in the Xizang plateau, it runs for 2,622 miles and drains into the South China Sea.

CLIMATE

Vietnam experiences a tropical monsoon climate, and the humidity level averages 84 percent year-round. During the winter from November to April, the climate is dry. Over the southwesterly summer monsoon, normally during the months of May through October, Vietnam experiences heavy rainfall, accounting for almost 90 percent of annual precipitation.

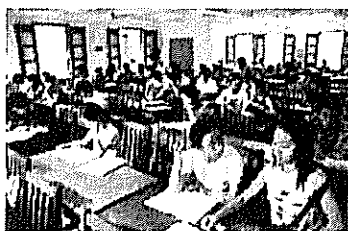


www.viet-imports.com

Annual rainfall ranges from 47 inches to 118 inches and temperatures range from 41°F to over 99°F. The coldest months are during December and January, while April is the hottest month. For the most part, the plains experience a higher average annual temperature than in the mountains and plateaus. The northern half of Vietnam undergoes a noticeable change in the seasons. In the southern half, except in various locations in the highlands, seasonal temperatures will normally fall between 70°F and 82°F.

EDUCATION

The French colonial government discontinued the Confucian education system through the passing of the 1917 Law on Education, thus introducing a system fashioned after that of France. In spite of the changes, the system was only able to serve an estimated three percent of the Vietnamese population. Illiteracy rate in 1954 after the French Indochina War was over 85 percent. Thus, the government made tackling the problem of education of high importance.



www.culturalprofiles.net

A basic system of national education was implemented through the passing of education reforms in the years 1945 and 1950. The system incorporated pre-school programs, primary and secondary schools, adult education, and a network of colleges and universities. The Saigon regime also introduced comparable reforms between 1945 and 1975. After Reunification, the central government has taken steps to have the national education system fully integrated.

The government provides free primary and secondary education to students; operating 13,355 basic and 1,157 secondary schools, and fewer than 300 vocational schools. Some schools operate in shifts due to large numbers of attendance. There are 110 public higher education institutions. Recently, semi-public and private universities and colleges have been established, with student attendance at the different schools comprising 18 percent of the total number of university students in Vietnam. Presently, the literacy rate is between 78 and 84 percent, and 97 percent of school age children are in school. Graduation rate from junior secondary education is at 98.5 percent.

TRADITIONS

Central to Vietnamese life is the tradition of geomancy, popularly known as “Feng Shui.” Vietnamese call it “Phong Thuy,” orienting different structures to be in tune with the environment. Conservative traditions dictate that any physical contact in public should be avoided, especially people of different genders. While women still wear traditional clothing on special occasions, many Vietnamese wear western-style clothes. When writing names, family name is first, then followed by the middle and first names. Vietnamese do not traditionally observe birthdays, but western culture has had an influence.

Rice is a staple food in Vietnam and is prepared either by steaming or by boiling. Most of the side dishes consist of vegetables, but meats such as pork, prawns, beef, chicken, and fish are used. Vietnam is famous for its noodle dishes that can be served either with or without soup. The main ingredients for the noodles are wheat, rice, or beans.



www.circleofasia.com

Cuisine in Vietnam varies among the North, the Central, and the South regions. Most of the Northern foods are stir-fried or simmered, with mainly soy sauce and black pepper added to dishes. In the central region, prepared food is typically colorful and spicy, with the style of cooking dating back to the ancient Kingdom of Champa. This food preparation is complex, utilizing many herbs and spice. The Southern Region features many kinds of vegetables, fish, and seafood. The use of curries is popular, and the style of cooking is similar to that used in Cambodia.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

The 2009 CIA World Factbook estimate reveals a population of slightly less than eighty-seven million. The estimate also shows a population growth rate of 0.977 percent. Over half of the country's population was born after 1975. Three-quarter of the total population lives and works in the countryside. However, this demography is changing as the cities and the surrounding areas become industrialized.

Fifty-four ethnic cultures can be found in Vietnam. The largest culture in the country, consisting 86.2 percent of the population, are the Vietnamese-Kinh. Other larger ethnic minorities, in descending order, are the Tay, Thai, Muong, Hoa, Khme, Nung, and H'mong.

The official language is Vietnamese, which is a member of the Austro-Asiatic language family. Even though it has similarities with other Southeast Asian languages, it is believed to be a separate language group. Vietnamese is a tonal language, comparable to Khmer, official language of Cambodia. Foreigners find it difficult to learn Vietnamese because there are six different tones that can be used for each syllable to change the definition of a single word. The Roman alphabet is used to write the language, with tones shown by the use of accent marks.

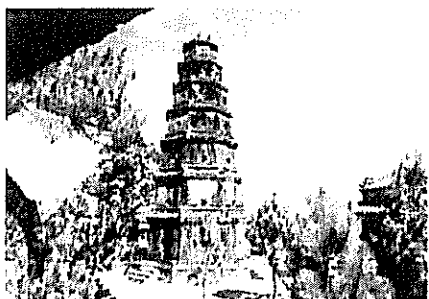
Most people living in the countryside have maintained the same lifestyle that has been passed on from past generations. This lifestyle involves families living in the same home, cultivating the same rice fields and practicing the same religion. However, in the cities, the younger generation lives a different lifestyle from their parents. Vietnamese cherish extended family, which includes second and even third cousins. Such a family dynamic is a source of strength for the older generation; however, the younger generations have closer connections with friends.

Ancestor worship is important to Vietnamese life. At a young age, children learn to respect their parents and elders, as they can impart wisdom from their life experiences. In the case of marriage, parents living in the countryside will normally arrange marriages for their children. Divorces do not usually occur, but are more frequent in the cities than in the countryside.

Husbands take the role of meeting the economic needs of the family; while wives have the expectation of looking after the family. For those wives living in the countryside, they are expected to do the agricultural work. Wives are to submit to their husbands, and if widowed, to their eldest sons. Older children assist in taking care of their younger siblings.

RELIGION

The most predominant religions in Vietnam are Buddhism, Catholicism and Protestantism. Other religions include Caodaism, Hoahaoism, and Islamism. Seventy percent of the population is considered Buddhist, or are strongly influenced by Buddhist practices. Of the remaining population, only 20 percent are considered Christians.



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In 200 AD, Chinese monks introduced the Mahayana Buddhism to the Red River Delta Region. Roughly the same time period, Indian travelers introduced another variation of Buddhism called Theravada Buddhism. During the 10th century, Buddhism became accepted among the royalty and was made the state religion during the middle of the 12th century. Later in the 13th and 14th centuries, Confucianism was preferred over Buddhism.

Both Catholicism and Protestantism were introduced around the same time in the 17th century. Currently, the areas with a dense population of Catholics are Bui Chu-Phat Diem in the Ninh Binh province to the North, and Ho Nai-Bien Hoa in the Dong Nai province to the South. Most Protestants live in the Central Highlands. In South Vietnam, followers of Caodaism reside near the Church in Tay Ninh. This religion was first introduced to the country in 1926. Hoahaoism was introduced in 1939, and is commonly practiced in the western part of South Vietnam. Islamic followers are from the Cham ethnic minority group that resides in the central part of the central coast.

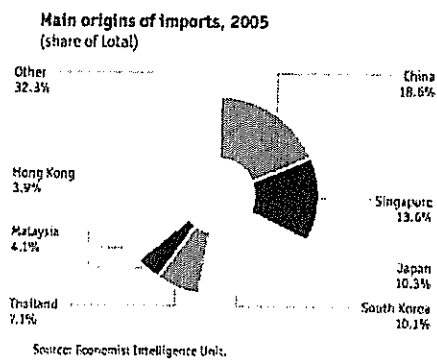
HOLIDAYS

Vietnam still observes five main traditional holidays. Historically, Vietnamese life was based on agricultural seasons, and thus, the lunar cycle determined the various holidays. The first holiday is Nguyen Dan, literary meaning “the new morning.” Observed during the New Year, it is the most important holiday whereby a family seeks safety and good luck. The second holiday, Thuong Nguyen, celebrates the first full moon. Even though it began as a Buddhist holiday celebrating the birthday of Amitabha Buddha, many Vietnamese still follow the tradition.

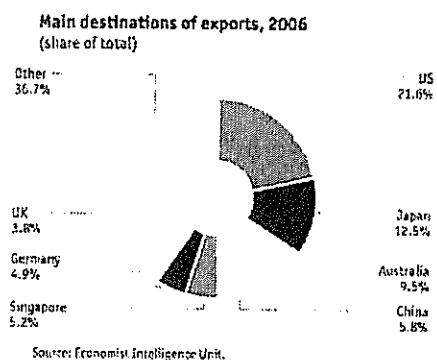
Doan Ngo is the third holiday and observes the first day of summer. The celebrations occur on the fifth day of the fifth month. The holiday is observed as a means of eliminating bad health for the coming year, whereby people eat fermented rice and sour fruit. The fourth holiday, Trung Nguyen, is celebrated on the fifteenth of the seventh month of the year to observe the mid-year full moon. The fifth holiday is Trung Thu that observes the mid-autumn full moon. Normally held during the night, this holiday celebrates having a good harvest for the year.

ECONOMY

Both its membership in the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) as well as entry in the US-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement has allowed Vietnam to enhance its trade and economic system. Modernizing the system took place through structural reforms moving away from a centrally planned economy.



Vietnam has enjoyed one of the fastest annual growth rates in Asia, at an average of 7.5 percent. In 2004, the number of Vietnamese living below poverty line fell to less than 20 percent. Since 2001 to 2007, the amount of exports to the United States increased 900 percent. After many years of negotiations, Vietnam was able to join the World Trade Organization in January 2007. Becoming a member in the organization allowed Vietnam to gain a position in the global market and improve the domestic economic reform process.



Although Vietnam is experiencing growth in its economy, it still faces various problems. One problem is inflation, rising above the 14 percent mark in January 2008. A second problem is the rise in property prices in large cities. Vietnam is also experiencing an increase in its trade deficit, where the amount of goods and services imported into the country exceeds its exports.

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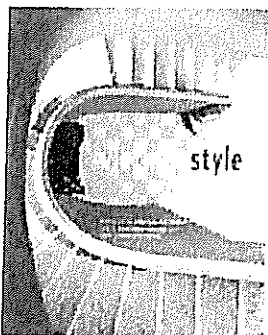
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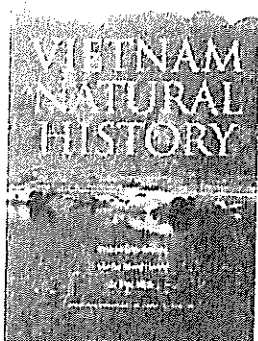


Vietnam Style

By: Bertrand De Hartingh, Luca Invernizzi, Anna Craven-Smith-Milnes, Luca Invernizzi Tettoni

Publisher: Periplus Editions, 2007

This book deals with how colonialism has been able to have an effect on the traditional architecture designs. Over time, colonial influence has been adopted in the design style of structures such as shophouses, temples, palaces, and other houses. Vietnam Style therefore takes a closer look at modern day Vietnamese architecture and design.

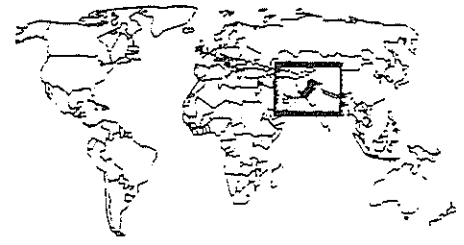


Vietnam: A Natural History

By: Eleanor Jane Sterling, Martha Maud Hurley, Le Duc Minh

Publisher: Yale University Press, 2007

This book is the first time that Vietnam's natural history has been detailed in English. It explores the biological diversity through illustrations, and also discusses the factors affecting the evolution and distribution of the numerous plants and animals. There are chapters that focus on the three different regions within Vietnam. These chapters provide prospective visitors with information that guides them to natural places they can visit. Additionally, the book looks at the impact that humans have had on nature over time.



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Covering 310,401 square miles (803,940 square kilometers), Pakistan is about the same size as Texas and Oklahoma combined. Northern Pakistan has some of the world's highest mountains, including K2 in the Karakoram range. South of Islamabad, the country is mostly flat. Most people live in the fertile Indus River Valley, which runs through the country's center. Territory is divided between four provinces (Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, and the North-West Frontier), the Northern Areas, and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Pakistan's border with northern India is disputed, as each country claims the right to Kashmir but controls only a portion of it. Pakistan's portion (one-third of the territory) is called Azad Kashmir. The region is divided by a Line of Control de facto border. Earthquakes are common in Pakistan, and the Indus can flood during the rainy season (July–August). Except in the highlands, the climate is usually hot. Winter temperatures average about 50°F (10°C).

History. Pakistan's modern history began in the eighth century with the arrival of Arab traders who introduced Islam to the Indian subcontinent. Muslim warriors conquered most of the area in the 900s. By the 16th century, Muslim power reached its peak under the Moghul Dynasty. Although many inhabitants converted to Islam, the majority of the population (including India) remained Hindu. By the 1800s, the British East India Trading Company had become the dominant power in the area, and the last Moghul emperor was deposed in 1858. After World War I, British control of the subcontinent (basically India, Pakistan, and present-day Bangladesh) was contested by various independence movements that united for a time under Mahatma Gandhi. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was the leader of the Muslim League and began advocating separate Muslim and

Hindu nations in 1940.

In 1947, Britain granted independence to the entire area. Muslim leaders feared Hindus would control the new country and pressed for independence. A choice was given to each region ruled by a native prince to join either India or Pakistan. The areas that chose Pakistan became East and West Pakistan, separated by 1,000 miles (1,609 kilometers) of India.

East Pakistan (inhabited by Bengalis) declared independence in 1971, which prompted civil war. Indian troops defeated West Pakistani troops sent to quell the movement, and the Bengalis formed Bangladesh. In the power vacuum created by the army's defeat, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was elected leader of Pakistan. In 1977, General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq seized control of the government and jailed Bhutto, who was hanged in 1979. Zia postponed elections indefinitely, suspended civil rights, and established *shari'a* (Islamic law) as the basis of all civil law. In 1988, Zia was killed in a plane crash. Free elections were held and Bhutto's daughter, Benazir Bhutto, was elected prime minister.

Although Bhutto restored civil rights and attempted reforms, poverty remained widespread and the president dismissed her in 1990. Subsequent elections brought Nawaz Sharif to power as prime minister. His reforms were ineffective and Benazir Bhutto was narrowly reelected in 1993. Parliament chose Bhutto's political ally, Farooq Leghari, as president. Leghari later criticized Bhutto for alleged misconduct and dismissed her in 1996. In the subsequent 1997 elections, Nawaz Sharif's party gained a strong parliamentary majority. Bhutto left the country in 1999.

Sharif moved to open the peace talks with India, reform economic policy, and eliminate the president's ability to dismiss

an elected government. However, Sharif soon clashed with the Supreme Court, and Leghari resigned in protest. Rafiq Tarar, a Sharif loyalist, was selected as the new president in 1998.

In the 1947 vote for which country to join, most people of Kashmir chose Pakistan, but their Hindu prince chose India. The nations fought two wars over Kashmir, eventually agreeing to a cease-fire line in 1972. Violent separatist activity on India's side continued, fueling tensions between India and Pakistan because of Pakistan's support for the rebels. Peace talks opened in 1997 to resolve competing territorial claims. Progress was halted in 1998 when India tested its nuclear weapons and Pakistan responded by detonating its own bombs. Then, in 1999, India launched attacks on "infiltrators" that had crossed the Line of Control from Pakistan. Pakistan denied responsibility, and both nations began mobilizing for wider conflicts. Under international pressure, Sharif agreed to encourage a withdrawal from positions seized on India's side. This made him unpopular with the military, which had been supporting the insurgents, and Sharif dismissed army general Pervez Musharraf in October 1999.

Within minutes of this dismissal, troops seized control of the government. Musharraf soon returned from a trip to Sri Lanka, assumed power as chief executive, and arrested Sharif. Musharraf did not declare martial law but did temporarily suspend the constitution and install an interim government. His actions were welcomed by many Pakistanis who considered Sharif to be corrupt. Indeed, Sharif was later tried for various crimes, including murder, and was sentenced to life in prison. Musharraf has promised a return to civilian rule and an end to human-rights abuses and corruption.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Pakistan's estimated population of 145 million is growing annually by 2.1 percent. The majority of Pakistanis (67 percent) live in rural areas. The two largest cities are Karachi (14 million) and Lahore (5 million). The capital is Islamabad.

Pakistan has five major ethnic groups. The Punjabi is the largest, comprising about 65 percent. The other four groups are the Sindhi, Baluchi, Pashtuns (also called Pakhtuns), and Muhajir (immigrants from India and their descendants). Pakistan is also home to more than two million Afghan refugees, most of whom live in camps on the border.

Language. Many languages are spoken in Pakistan, due to the diversity of ethnic groups and the great difference between dialects in a single language. English is an official language and is used by the government and educated elite. It is also taught in school. Urdu, the other official language, is being encouraged as a replacement for English; it is also the nation's unifying language. While only 8 percent of the people speak Urdu as a native tongue, most speak it in addition to their own language. Each province is free to use its own regional languages and dialects. Major languages correlate with the ethnic groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi, Pashtu, and so forth.

Religion. The force uniting the diverse peoples of Pakistan is Islam. About 97 percent of the people are Muslims. Most of these (77 percent) are Sunni Muslims, while the remainder are *Shi'a* (Shi'ite) Muslims. Islam pervades every facet of a Pakistani's life, from birth to death, and people believe their destiny is subject to the will of *Allah* (God). Muslims accept major biblical prophets from Adam to Jesus, but they hold Muhammad as the last and greatest of *Allah's* prophets. Muslims believe in a resurrection and a final judgment but do not accept Jesus as

the son of *Allah*. The *Qur'an* (Koran) is composed of *Allah's* revelations given to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel and is the chief scripture of Islam. Christians comprise about 2 percent of the population, and a small Hindu community exists in Pakistan. Freedom of worship is guaranteed, but non-Muslims may not vote and are often targets for official and unofficial persecution.

General Attitudes. Most Pakistanis are devout Muslims and live according to the philosophy that the will of *Allah* is evident in all things. *Inshallah* (God willing) is a term commonly employed to express hope for success on a project, for one's family, or for a positive outcome to events. *Shari'a* is used when practical, but Western legal and business practices also exist. This approach attempts to offer personal freedoms while maintaining equally important religious values.

Pakistan is a nation of diversity, and people often identify first with their group before identifying with the country. Differences are evident between ethnic groups. Pashtuns and Baluchis are more conservative and traditional than the other major groups. Differences also exist between urban and rural populations, the latter being more conservative. Tensions between ethnic, religious, or political groups sometimes erupt into violent riots.

Personal Appearance. Although conservative, Western-style clothing is worn in Pakistan, the national dress, the *shalwar-qameez*, is more common in both rural and urban areas. The cotton *shalwar-qameez* differs for men and women. Men wear solid, plain colors and add a vest or coat for formal occasions. Women prefer brighter colors and bolder patterns on a more tailored *shalwar-qameez*. Women wear a *dupatta* (scarf) around their heads and sometimes another long scarf around their shoulders. A man usually wears some kind of headdress that is distinctive to his particular ethnic group. For example, some are turbans, others pillbox-type hats, and others *karakuli* (fez-type) hats. Despite the heat, Pakistanis cover their legs, arms, and heads in public. Men only wear shorts for athletic events and women never do.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. A handshake is the most common greeting, although close friends may embrace if meeting after a long time. Women might greet each other with a handshake or hug. It is not appropriate for a man to shake hands with a woman or to touch her in public, but he may greet a man's wife verbally without looking directly at her. Verbal greetings often include lengthy inquiries about one's health and family; men might place the right hand over the heart during this part of the greeting. In Pakistan, the most common greeting is *Assalaam alaikum* (May peace be upon you). The reply is *Walaikum assalaam* (And peace also upon you). "Good-bye" is *Khodha haafis*. In more formal situations, people address others by title and last name. They use first names for friends and relatives.

Gestures. It is not proper for the bottom of one's foot or shoe to point at another person. Therefore, people often squat or sit with both feet on the ground. If sitting on the floor, or if crossing the legs, one positions the feet so as not to point them directly at others. Items are passed with the right hand or both hands. To beckon, one waves all fingers of the hand with the palm facing down. Using individual fingers to make gestures is impolite. Male friends may walk hand in hand or with their arms over each other's shoulders, but it is inappropriate for members of the opposite sex to touch in public.

Visiting. Visiting between friends and relatives is an important

groups, each person is greeted individually. Personal rapport is important. Visitors are often treated to coffee, tea, or soft drinks and may be invited to eat a meal. Visitors should accept this hospitality, although refusing politely with good reason is appropriate. Guests often bring gifts if well acquainted with the hosts or if the occasion calls for a present. Gifts might include something for the children, a decoration for the home, fruit, or sweets. More expensive gifts might embarrass the hosts. It is customary to socialize before a meal and then to leave soon after the meal is finished. In traditional homes, men and women do not socialize together. Rather, men receive their male guests in a special room to enjoy conversation and refreshments.

Eating. Whenever possible, the whole family eats together, usually sharing the same platter. Each member of the family eats from the portion directly in front of him or her. In urban areas, many people have dining tables, in which case they may eat with utensils or the hand. In rural areas, people primarily eat with the right hand and sit on the floor or ground. *Chapati* (bread) is also used to scoop up food.

Fathers might feed young children and mothers feed infants. In large groups, men and women eat in separate areas. Extended families often gather for large meals. During the month of *Ramadan*, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sundown each day. They eat together in the evenings, which are also occasions to visit or offer prayers. During *Ramadan*, it is polite for non-Muslims to not eat or drink in front of fasting Muslims.

LIFESTYLE

Family. The family is the center of social life and support.

Although increased modernization has brought many women into public life, men continue to act as head of their homes. It is common for the extended family—a father and mother, their sons, and the sons' families—to live together in the same household. The presiding male of the family has significant influence over the lives of all family members, although women are increasingly taking on active decision-making roles. Family honor is very important to many ethnic groups, and some will kill a woman who has become pregnant out of wedlock or has otherwise brought shame to the family name. Islamic law permits a man to have as many as four wives if he can care for each equally, but very few actually have more than one. The elderly are highly respected.

Nuclear families generally are large: the average woman bears six children in her lifetime. The government stresses family planning to help curb population growth. In the past, large and powerful feudal families had significant power over politics and the economy. As wealthy landowners, they still have considerable influence, although the military and bureaucracy have played equally powerful roles since independence. Today, the people often turn to these feudal families when government bureaucracy fails. The average family works hard for a basic living, which does not often include the luxury of modern conveniences.

Dating and Marriage. Boys and girls have little contact with each other: they attend separate schools and are not allowed to date (except among Westernized urban Pakistanis). Individual choice of marriage partners is far less common than arranged marriages. Formal engagements may last from a few months to many years, depending on the age of the couple when the

marriage as a union of two families as much as a union of two people. Both families participate in the wedding preparations. A Muslim holy man, usually called a *Qazi* in Pakistan, completes the marriage contract between the two families. Wedding rituals are elaborate, with three days of expensive celebrations.

Diet. The mainstay of the Pakistani diet is *chapati* or *roti*, an unleavened bread similar to pita bread. Pakistani food generally is hot and spicy, and curry is one of the most popular spices. Islamic law forbids the consumption of pork and alcohol and there are strict civil laws regarding the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. A type of yogurt is a common ingredient in meals. Rice is part of most meals and desserts. *Pillau* (lightly fried rice with vegetables) and *biryani* (rice with meat and spices) are two customary dishes. *Kheer* is a type of rice pudding.

The most common meats are lamb, beef, chicken, and fish. Only more affluent families are able to eat these regularly; the poor eat meat on special occasions. For marriage feasts, chicken curry is common. There are significant regional differences in cuisine. For example, while curries and heavy spices prevail in the south, barbecuing is more common in the north. The *kebab*, strips or chunks of meat barbecued over an open grill on a skewer, is prepared in various ways. Pakistanis enjoy a number of vegetables and fruits. Tea is the most popular drink.

Recreation. Introduced by the British, cricket, field hockey, and squash are among the most popular national sports. Sports developed in Pakistan include a type of team wrestling called *kabaddi*, and polo, which was adopted by the British and exported to England. Pakistanis also enjoy soccer and tennis. Going to movies, watching television (or videos), having picnics, listening to native music, and visiting friends and family members are other forms of recreation.

The Arts. Islam greatly influences Pakistani art. *Qawwali* (literally, "utterance") is a song of worship traditionally performed by Islamic Sufi mystics and accompanied by instruments such as the *dholak* (drum) and the *rabab* (stringed instrument). Islamic art is based on intricate, brightly colored geometrical designs, which adorn common crafts such as woodwork, stonework, leather work, carpets, calligraphy, and basketry.

Literature, particularly poetry, is one of Pakistan's most respected art forms. Folklore is abundant and varies by region. Many people attend poetry readings called *musha'irahs*. Pakistani painting began when important literary and religious works were illustrated with brightly colored designs. Painting as an art form is gaining prominence, especially in large cities.

Holidays. Secular holidays include Pakistan Day (23 Mar.); Labor Day (1 May); Independence Day (14 Aug.); Defense of Pakistan Day (6 Sept.); Anniversary of the Death of Quaid-e-Azam (Mohammad Ali Jinnah), the nation's founder (11 Sept.); Allama Iqbal Day (9 Nov.); and the Birth of Quaid-e-Azam (25 Dec.). Bank holidays are in December and July.

Islamic holidays are regulated by the lunar calendar and fall on different days each year. The most important include *Eid-ul-Fitr*, the three-day feast at the end of *Ramadan*; *Eid-ul-Azha* (Feast of the Sacrifice), which commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, as well as the *haj* (pilgrimage) to Makkah, Saudi Arabia; and *Eid-i-Milad-un-Nabi*, the birth of the prophet Muhammad. During *Ramadan* evenings, many

towns sponsor fairs and other celebrations.

Commerce. Urban business hours extend from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. In the summer, this schedule is extended by 30 to 40 minutes. Open-air markets and street-side vendors are common; large towns have major bazaars, divided into many tiny shops grouped by the product they sell. According to Muslim worship, Friday is a day of rest. However, to increase Pakistan's global competitiveness, the government switched the day off to Sunday. A half-day off on Friday afternoon is optional.

SOCIETY

Government. Pakistan's interim government is led by a chief executive and president, Pervez Musharraf, and his National Security Council (NSC). The NSC has both military and civilian members. A cabinet of civilian ministers functions under the NSC, as do appointed provincial governors. A third of the local council seats are reserved for women and one for a representative of religious minorities. The voting age is 18. The judiciary continues to function, though judges are required to take an oath of allegiance to the provisional government.

Economy. Pakistan's main industry is agriculture, which employs about 45 percent of the people. Pakistan emphasizes high-yield grains to keep pace with a growing population. Agriculture accounts for more than half of all export earnings. Chief products include rice, cotton, wheat, sugarcane, fruits, and vegetables. Clothing and textiles are also important exports. At the time of independence, Pakistan had very little industry. Over the past several years, however, industrialization has grown substantially. Remittances from Pakistani workers in other countries are an important source of revenue.

Low tax revenues, a high budget deficit, widespread corruption, and other concerns have significantly hindered development. In a stable atmosphere, abundant resources such as natural gas could play a role in future development. For now, it is difficult for many families to meet basic needs, and poverty affects about 40 percent of the population. Inflation is moderate, and unemployment is high. The currency is the Pakistani rupee (PRu).

Transportation and Communications. Local transportation consists of donkeys and horse-drawn carts in rural areas. In cities, buses, minibuses, and motorized rickshas are available. Although slightly more than half of the roads are paved, many are in poor condition. Roads in rural areas are not paved and many areas are not accessible by car. The Grand Trunk Road is a paved highway that begins in India and runs from Lahore to Islamabad to Peshawar. Following the British tradition, traffic moves on the left side of the road. Most people do not own telephones; phones are available in hotels, shops, and restaurants. Mobile phones are becoming the preferred mode of business communication. There are several radio stations and newspapers and one television station. In 2000, the government introduced the Internet to more than one hundred Pakistani cities as part of a new information technology policy. There is a domestic airline and a railway. Most people do not own telephones; phones are available in hotels, shops, and restaurants. Mobile phones are becoming the preferred mode of business communication. There are several radio stations and

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	127 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	117 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$2,000
Adult literacy rate	59 percent (male); 30 (female)
Infant mortality rate	81 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	61 (male); 62 (female)

newspapers and one television station.

Education. Pakistan's literacy rate is low, especially among women. While close to 60 percent of all adult men are literate, only 30 percent of adult women can read or write. Due to poverty and the lack of proper facilities, children either cannot attend school or drop out after only a few years to help the family. Still, government efforts have increased the number of primary schools available in rural areas. Primary schooling is free. At secondary levels, efforts are directed at training technicians to aid in expanding the nation's industrial base.

Health. Medical services in Pakistan are limited. Fully equipped hospitals are located in urban areas but generally are understaffed. Outside the cities, medical care is scarce. The government is trying to increase the number of doctors available in the rural areas, but many seek more lucrative employment abroad. Some provinces are experimenting with using army personnel to aid with health care in rural areas. Water is not safe for drinking in most areas, and malaria is widespread.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- In April 2002, President Musharraf overwhelmingly won a referendum that will allow him to stay in power as president and chief executive for five more years. Opposition groups claim the referendum is illegal and unconstitutional, but the general population has accepted the referendum as binding. Parliamentary elections are tentatively scheduled for October 2002.
- In 2002, an attack on an Indian army outpost in Jammu and Kashmir resulted in an escalation of tension between India and Pakistan. Both sides are now preparing for war. Some fear that a conventional war would escalate into nuclear conflict, but officials on both sides have denounced the use of nuclear weapons.
- Pakistan's cooperation with the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan opened the doors to a resumption of international aid, frozen since Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1999. The United States lifted economic sanctions in September 2001, and the International Monetary Fund has since loaned more than \$US1.5 billion for poverty reduction.
- In 2000, the government introduced the Internet to more than one hundred Pakistani cities as part of a new information technology policy.

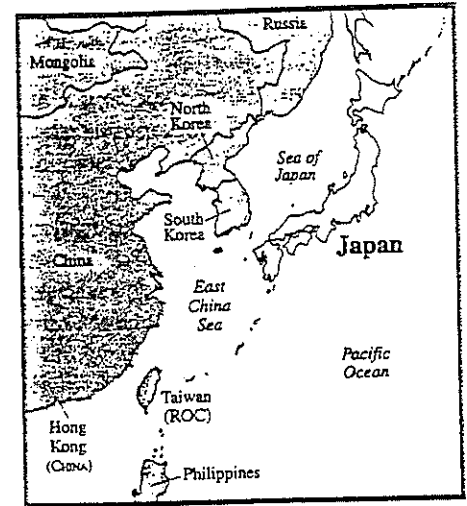
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Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Japan consists of four main islands: Honshu, Hokkaido, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Covering 145,882 square miles (377,835 square kilometers), it is just smaller than Montana. Japan experiences all four seasons. On Hokkaido and in northern Honshu, winters can be bitterly cold. To the south, a more tropical climate prevails. Otherwise, the climate is temperate with warm, humid summers and mild winters. The western side of the islands is usually colder than the eastern (Pacific) side. The islands are subject to typhoons in September. Japan also has many dormant and a few active volcanoes. Mild earthquakes are fairly common, and more destructive earthquakes hit every few years.

History. Japan is known historically as the Land of the Rising Sun, as symbolized by its flag. Beginning with Emperor Jimmu in 600 B.C. (according to legend), Japan has had a line of emperors that continues to the present. From the 12th century until the late 19th century, however, feudal lords, or *Shoguns*, held political control. These Shoguns expelled all foreigners in the 17th century on the suspicion they were spies for European armies. Not until 1853, when Matthew Perry (U.S. Navy) sailed into port, did the Japanese again have contact with the West. The Shoguns lost power in the 1860s and the emperor again took control. The current emperor, Akihito, took the throne in 1989. Akihito's father, Hirohito, was emperor from 1926 to 1989. Hirohito's reign was called *Showa*, which means "enlightened peace." The deceased Hirohito is now properly referred to as Emperor Showa. Akihito's reign is called *Heisei*, meaning "achievement of universal peace."

Japan established itself as a regional power through military victories against China (1895) and Russia (1905). Involvement

in World War I brought Japan enhanced global influence, and the Treaty of Versailles expanded its land holdings. The postwar years brought prosperity to the rapidly changing nation. It soon began to exercise considerable influence in Asia and subsequently invaded Manchuria and much of China. On 7 December 1941, Japan launched a successful air attack on U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor. Its military machine swiftly encircled most of Southeast Asia. But in 1943, the tide of the war turned against Japan. The United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the summer of 1945. Complete collapse of the empire and surrender ensued. A military occupation, chiefly by U.S. forces, lasted from 1945 to 1952. In 1947, Japan adopted a new constitution under U.S. American direction, renouncing war, granting basic human rights, and declaring Japan a democracy. The United States and Japan have since maintained close political and military ties despite periodic trade tensions.

Japan's postwar focus was on economic development, and the country experienced rapid change and modernization. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) generally controlled politics after World War II, although scandals in the 1980s and 1990s led to high-level resignations and splinter parties. The LDP was briefly the opposition party in 1995, but it regained power in 1996. Facing severe economic woes in 1998, the nation slid into recession and the currency nearly collapsed under the strain of bad bank loans and in conjunction with a wider Asian economic crisis. By 1999, the LDP had to form a coalition government with the Liberal Party to have the votes necessary to pass legislation. Government priorities are to stabilize the economy, attack corruption, and restore Japanese confidence in their political system. Government leaders have encouraged

citizens to be patient with the long process as the increasing national debt and high unemployment create additional pressures on the economy.

PEOPLE

Population. Japan's population of 127 million is growing at only 0.2 percent annually. Japan is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. About 80 percent of all people live in urban areas. Almost half are concentrated in three major metropolitan areas: Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya. Tokyo is one of the world's most populous cities. Japan is 99 percent ethnic Japanese, with a small number of Koreans (about 0.6 percent) and Chinese. Native Ainu live mostly on Hokkaido. All non-Japanese must register annually with the police and do not have full citizenship rights.

Overall, Japan's impressive level of economic and social organization is diminished by a high cost of living and the stress inherent in an emphasis on work, a lack of affordable urban housing, high urban population levels, and inflexible social institutions.

Language. Japanese is the official language. Although spoken Japanese is not closely related to spoken Chinese, the written language (*kanji*) is related to Chinese ideographs (characters), which were adopted in ancient times. The Japanese also use two phonetic alphabets (*hiragana* and *katakana*) simplified from these characters. A third phonetic alphabet (*romaji*) uses Roman letters. People are losing their ability to write the complex *kanji* as they rely more on computers. English is taught in all secondary schools and is often used in business. The Japanese place great worth on nonverbal language or communication. For example, much can be said with a proper bow. In fact, one is often expected to sense another person's feelings on a subject without verbal communication. Some Westerners misinterpret this as a desire to be vague or incomplete. The Japanese may consider a person's inability to interpret feelings as insensitivity.

Religion. Traditionally, most Japanese (84 percent) practiced a combination of Buddhism and Shinto. Shinto has no recognized founder or central scripture but is based on ancient mythology. It stresses a person's relationship to nature and its many gods. All Japanese emperors are considered literal descendants of the sun goddess, Amaterasu. Shinto was important historically in ordering social values, as illustrated by the Code of the Warrior (*Bushido*), which stressed honor, courage, politeness, and reserve.

Shinto principles of ancestor veneration, ritual purity, and a respect for nature's beauty are all obvious in Japanese culture. Many households observe some ceremonies of both Shinto and Buddhism, such as Shinto marriages and Buddhist funerals, and most have small shrines in their homes. For most, however, this is done more out of respect for social tradition than out of religious conviction. About 1 percent of the population is Christian.

General Attitudes. Japanese society is group oriented. Loyalty to the group (business, club, etc.) and to one's superiors is essential and takes precedence over personal feelings. In business, loyalty, devotion, and cooperation are valued over aggressiveness. Companies traditionally provide lifetime employment to the "salary-man" (full-time male professional), and the "salary-man" devotes long hours of work to the company. This tradition has been undermined by the economic decline but is still a pillar of society. Devotion to the group reaches all ages: even members of a youth baseball team

will place the team's interests above their own.

Politeness is extremely important: a direct "no" is seldom given, but a phrase like "I will think about it" can mean "no." Also out of politeness, a "yes" may be given quickly, even though it only means the person is listening or understands the speaker's request. The Japanese feel an obligation to return favors and gifts. They honor age and tradition. "Losing face," or being shamed in public, is very undesirable. *Gaman* (enduring patience) is a respected trait that carries one through personal hardship.

Even as many traditions remain strong, Japan's rising generation is revising society's views and reforming negative aspects of family relations, politics, and male and female roles. By contrast, greater economic insecurity, less filial piety, lower moral standards, and consumerism have all damaged social cohesion and have led many Japanese to question the country's future course. Anxiety has become commonplace, and belief in superstitions is on the rise.

Personal Appearance. Conformity, even in appearance, is a characteristic of the Japanese. The general rule is to act similar to, or in harmony with, the crowd. Businessmen wear suits and ties in public. Women wear dresses or slacks. Proper dress is necessary for certain occasions. Conformity takes on a different meaning for the youth, however. They will wear the latest fashions (U.S. American and European) and colors, as long as these fashions are popular. Traditional clothing, called a *kimono* or *wafuku*, is a long robe with long sleeves, wrapped with a special sash (*obi*). The designs in the fabric can be simple or elaborate. The *kimono* is worn for social events or special occasions.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. A bow is the traditional greeting between Japanese. Persons wishing to show respect or humility bow lower than the other person. The Japanese shake hands with Westerners. While some appreciate it when Westerners bow, others do not, especially when the two people are not acquainted. Therefore, a handshake is most appropriate for foreign visitors. The Japanese are formal, and titles are important in introductions. A family name is used with the suffix *-san*. Mr. Ogushi in North America is called *Ogushi-san* in Japan. The use of first names is reserved for family and friends. Between business representatives, the exchange of business cards (offered and accepted with both hands) most often accompanies a greeting.

Greetings used depend on the relationship. A worker might greet a superior with *Ohayougozaimasu* (Good morning), but he or she would greet a customer with *Irasshaimase* (Welcome). When business representatives meet for the first time, they may use *Hajimemashite* (Nice to meet you). *Konnichiwa* (Hello) is a standard greeting. *Ohayou* (an informal "Good morning") and *Yaa! Genki?* (Hi! How's it going?) are common casual greetings among the youth.

Gestures. Yawning in public is impolite. A person should sit up straight with both feet on the floor. Legs may be crossed at the knee or ankles, but placing an ankle over a knee is improper. One beckons by waving all fingers with the palm down. It is polite to point with the entire hand. Shaking one hand from side to side with the palm forward means "no." People refer to themselves by pointing the index finger at their nose. Laughter does not necessarily signify joy or amusement: it can also be a sign of embarrassment. One covers one's mouth when using a toothpick. Chewing gum in public is considered impolite. Young girls often walk hand in hand.

visits between neighbors are uncommon in urban areas. The Japanese remove shoes before stepping into a home. There is usually a small hallway (*genkan*) between the door and living area where one stands to remove the shoes and place them together pointing toward the outdoors—or in a closet or on a shelf in the *genkan*. People take off their coats before stepping into the *genkan*. Slippers often are worn inside but not in rooms with straw-mat floors (*tatami*). Japanese traditionally emphasize modesty and reserve. Guests usually are offered the most comfortable seat. When offered a meal, they often express slight hesitation before accepting it. Light refreshments are accepted graciously. The Japanese deny compliments out of modesty. Guests avoid excessive compliments on items in the home because they would embarrass the hosts.

Guests customarily take a gift (usually fruit or cakes) to their hosts. People give and accept gifts with both hands and a slight bow. Some, especially the elderly, may consider it impolite to open the gift right away. Gift-giving is extremely important, especially in business, because a gift says a great deal about the giver's relationship to, and respect for, the recipient. Food and drink are the most common gifts, as gifts for the house would quickly clutter small homes. Gift-giving reaches its peak at the end of each year, when giving the right-priced present (the price is more important than the item) to all the right people (family, friends, officials, and business contacts) sets the tone for the coming year.

Eating. Although many young people eat while walking in public, it is generally considered bad manners for adults to do so. Therefore, snack foods sold at street stands are eaten at the stand. In a traditional meal, the Japanese typically eat from their bowl while holding it at chest level instead of bending down to the table. People eat most meals with chopsticks (*hashi*) but generally eat Western food with utensils. U.S. American fast food is popular among the youth. The main meal is eaten in the evening. Because many men work late hours, they may eat dinner in office-building restaurants or on the way home.

LIFESTYLE

Family. The family is the foundation of Japanese society and is bound together by a strong sense of reputation, obligation, and responsibility. A person's actions reflect on the family. Affection, spending time together, and spousal compatibility are less important than in other cultures. While the father is the head of the home, the mother is responsible for managing household affairs and raising children. Traditionally, it was considered improper for a woman to have a job. Today, women comprise 40 percent of the workforce. While many women today work outside the home, their positions mostly are inferior to those held by men. Divorce and single parenthood are rare compared to other nations, due mostly to economic pressures and negative stigmas associated with both. Families generally have fewer than three children. In cities, families live in high-rise apartments or small homes. Larger homes are found in less-crowded areas.

Dating and Marriage. Youth in Japan are much like youth in the United States. They begin dating at around age 15 and enjoy dancing, going to movies, shopping, or eating out. They like Western music and fashion trends. The average marriage age is 27 for men and 26 for women. Weddings can be elaborate and expensive. Marriage ceremonies usually take place in hotels. The couple may wear traditional *kimonos* for the cere-

mony. The bride and groom's parents usually give gifts to the couple. Guests bring gifts, often cash, and leave with gifts from the couple.

Diet. The Japanese diet consists largely of rice, fresh vegetables, seafood, fruit, and small portions of meat. Rice and tea are part of almost every meal. Western-style food is increasingly popular, especially among the youth. Popular Japanese foods include *miso* (bean paste) soup, noodles (*ramen*, *udon*, and *soba*), curried rice, *sashimi* (uncooked fish), tofu, and pork. Sushi is usually a combination of fish (cooked or raw) and rice. Sometimes a vegetable, such as cucumber, is added to the dish or used instead of fish. Sushi wrapped in dried seaweed (*nori*) is called *norimaki*. Sushi is expensive and reserved for special occasions.

Recreation. Baseball, soccer, volleyball, tennis, skiing, and jogging are all popular in Japan. The Japanese also enjoy traditional sports such as sumo wrestling (a popular spectator sport), judo, *kendo* (fencing with bamboo poles), and karate. Baseball, brought to Japan in the 1870s by a U.S. American, is the national sport. It is highly competitive at all levels. The entire country follows the annual national high school championships. Golf, while expensive, is popular among men. For leisure, people enjoy television, karaoke, movies, or nature outings.

The Arts. In Japan, Western arts such as symphonic music and ballets are common, but many important traditional arts exist. Older adults favor puppet theater (*bunraku*) and highly stylized drama (*noh* and *kabuki*). *Kabuki* is known for spectacular sets and costumes. Like *noh*, it blends dance, music, and acting. The Japanese also attend music concerts and theater. *Gagaku* is one of the oldest types of Japanese music. It is played with string and wind instruments and drums. Pop music is a major part of Japanese culture.

Shodo (calligraphy) is well respected. Haiku, a form of poetry developed in the 17th century, is also popular. Writers portray scenes from life and nature. Flower arranging (*ikebana*) is highly developed, having first been practiced in the sixth century.

Holidays. At the New Year, Japanese take an extended holiday from the last day or two in December to about the third of January. Businesses and government offices close while people visit shrines and relatives. Other important holidays include Adults' Day (15 Jan.), when those who will turn 20 during the year are honored as coming of age; National Foundation Day (11 Feb.); Vernal Equinox (in March); *Midori No hi* (Greenery Day, 29 April), a day to celebrate nature's beauty; Constitution Day (3 May); Children's Day (5 May); Bon Festival (15 Aug.), a time when people take vacation and return to their ancestral homes to welcome visiting ancestral spirits with bonfires; Respect for the Aged Day (15 Sept.); Autumnal Equinox (in September); Sports Day (10 Oct.); Culture Day (3 Nov.); Labor Thanksgiving Day (23 Nov.); and Emperor Akihito's Birthday (23 Dec.).

Commerce. Businesses are typically open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Small shops and large urban shopping areas may stay open much later and do not close for lunch. Business dealings are conducted formally. Time is often required for decisions and agreements. The Japanese may be more interested in the person or company with which they are dealing than in the actual details of the deal. Many Japanese work late into the evening; overtime is a common necessity.

SOCIETY

Government. Japan is a constitutional monarchy. Emperor Akihito is head of state but has no governing power. Prime Minister Koizumi is head of government. He and his cabinet form the executive branch. Legislative power is vested in the *Diet*, consisting of the 500-seat House of Representatives (lower house) and the 252-seat House of Councillors (upper house). Japan has 47 prefectures (provinces), each administered by an elected governor. The voting age is 20. More than one hundred seats in the *Diet* are held by second or third generations of a family, as voter loyalty to a local political family is often stronger than a desire for qualified candidates. Hence, when former prime minister Keizo Obuchi died, his daughter interrupted her college studies to stand for his seat in the June 2000 elections. Though she had no previous political experience, her victory was assured by her father's and grandfather's possession of the seat.

Economy. Japan is one of the world's largest economies. Nevertheless, Japan has few natural resources and imports most raw materials. Also, because only about 11 percent of the land is suitable for cultivation, Japan imports nearly half of its food supply. Major local crops include rice, sugar, vegetables, tea, and various fruits. Japan is a leading supplier of fish.

Nearly all exports are manufactured items, including automobiles, electronic equipment, televisions, and other items. Major industries include machinery, metals, engineering, electronics, textiles, and chemicals. The United States is Japan's biggest trading partner. Although a trade imbalance and conflicts over market access are sources of friction between the two allies, they support each other in major economic difficulties. For example, when the *yen* (¥) nearly collapsed in 1998, the United States moved to support it and to encourage necessary reforms. The five-year economic downturn has led to record-high unemployment, slipping productivity, low consumer spending, and a high bankruptcy rate. Growth has been minimal despite government programs to stimulate the economy. Lack of economic reform has inhibited recovery and growth.

Transportation and Communications. A highly developed, efficient mass-transit system of trains and buses is the principal mode of transportation in urban areas. Bullet trains (*Shinkansen*) provide rapid transportation between major cities. Subways are also available. Many people have private cars. Traffic is often heavy in Tokyo and other large cities. Japan has five international airports. Its communications system is highly modern and well developed. Newspapers and magazines are widely read.

Education. Japan has a high literacy rate; education is generally free and compulsory from ages six to fifteen. Individuals must pay tuition for education thereafter. The curriculum stresses math and sciences. Students are in school Monday through Saturday, with one Saturday off a month. Many students attend private schools, provided they pass difficult entrance exams (even at the kindergarten level). Parents often enroll their children in *juku* (cram) schools to help them prepare for these tests. University entrance exams are rigorous, and competition among students is intense. Students study for years and cram for months to take them. Getting into the most

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	9 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	11 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$24,900
Adult literacy rate	99 percent (male); 99 (female)
Infant mortality rate	4 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	77 (male); 84 (female)

prestigious schools is more important than one's ultimate performance. Graduation from the top universities usually guarantees students well-paying jobs. These universities are affiliated with specific high, middle, and elementary schools; hence, getting into the right elementary school can help guarantee one's future success.

Health. The Japanese enjoy one of the highest standards of health in the world, with a very low infant mortality rate and a high life expectancy rate. Companies are generally responsible for providing insurance benefits to employees, but the government also sponsors some social welfare programs. Medical facilities are very good. Pollution is a major problem in Tokyo.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of the LDP came to office in April 2001 after Yoshiro Mori was ousted due to charges of corruption and poor leadership. Koizumi was originally seen as the champion of economic and political reform. However, his popularity ratings have fallen by about 50 percent as political scandals continue and the pace of economic reforms remains slow. Despite the fall in his popularity, Koizumi's administration says it will press ahead with plans such as privatizing the post office and restructuring the country's loans.
- In December 2001, Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako celebrated the birth of their first child, Princess Aiko. According to law, the royal throne must be inherited by a male. However, officials have discussed changing the law to allow a female to ascend to the throne.
- In May 2002, Japan hosted the International Whaling Commission conference. The talks were controversial due to Japan's call for the return of commercial whaling, which had been banned since 1986 except for scientific purposes.
- Japanese and Australian officials agreed in 2002 to begin working on a free trade agreement. Progress is expected to be slow due to the many trade barriers both countries have in place.

Contact Information. Embassy of Japan, 2520 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 238-6700; Web site www.us.emb-japan.go.jp. Japan National Tourist Office, 1 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 1250, New York, NY 10020; phone (212) 575-5640; Web site www.jnto.go.jp/english.



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▶ NORTH AMERICA

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Covering 761,602 square miles (1,972,550 square kilometers), Mexico is about three times the size of Texas, or one-fifth the size of the United States. It shares its northern border with the United States and its southern border with Guatemala and Belize. Mexico is rich in natural resources, including oil, natural gas, silver, iron ore, coal, copper, gold, lead, and zinc. Temperature and rainfall vary with elevation and region. Much of the north is dry and hot; humidity is higher in the south, where tropical jungles are found, and along coastal areas. The high and cooler central plateau, where Mexico City is located, is bounded by two mountain ranges: the Sierra Madre Oriental and Sierra Madre Occidental. Rain falls mainly in the summer (June–October) on the central plateau. Mountains, including many extinct volcanoes, cover two-thirds of the country.

History. Mexico's history boasts a long line of advanced Indian civilizations whose accomplishments rival those of the Egyptians and early Europeans. They had accurate calendars, understood astronomy, were skilled artisans, and built huge empires. The Olmecs were among the first inhabitants of the area, around 2000 B.C. The Mayan Empire built incredible cities throughout North and Central America but fell in the 12th century. The Aztecs were the last great empire, conquered by the Spanish in 1521. The Spanish assimilated some aspects of the Aztec culture while destroying others. They brought Christianity to the land and ruled until the 19th century.

Mexico was one of the first countries to revolt against Spain. The drive for independence began in September 1810, led by priest Miguel Hidalgo, and ended in 1821. A constitution was adopted in 1824 and a republic was established. However, Antonio López de Santa Ana took power in 1833 and ruled as

a dictator. During his regime, Mexico diminished in size: Texas seceded (1836) and came under U.S. control, and due to a war with the United States (1846–8), Mexico lost territory comprising much of the current western United States. Santa Ana resigned in 1855 and Benito Juárez became president. In 1861, French troops invaded Mexico City and named the Austrian archduke Maximilian the emperor of Mexico. Forces under Juárez overthrew Maximilian in 1867. Dictator Porfirio Díaz came to power in 1877 and was overthrown in 1910, when Mexico entered a period of internal political unrest and violence. That period, which ended in the 1920s and produced a new constitution, became known as Mexico's social revolution.

Political unrest continued in the 1930s, but the situation stabilized in the 1940s. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) emerged as the national leader in 1929: it ruled the country as a single party and restricted political dissent for many years. Many changes did take place, but none to challenge the PRI's position. Elected in 1988, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but after his term he fled the country because of allegations of corruption.

However, events in the mid-1990s helped weaken the party's power: The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) staged a 1994 rebellion in the state of Chiapas to protest government policy toward indigenous peoples. Charges of corruption against high-level government officials and the 1994 assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio shocked the ruling party. PRI replacement candidate Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León took office in 1994 but immediately encountered an economic and currency crisis. These

challenges, combined with electoral reforms, led to historic results in 1997 midterm elections. Opposition parties won important posts throughout the country, and the PRI lost control of the lower house in Congress for the first time since its founding. In July 2000, Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (NAP) was elected president, ending more than 70 years of PRI control of the government. Government priorities include strengthening the economy, reducing violence and corruption, and improving living conditions for all of Mexico's citizens.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Mexico has around 102 million people, a population that is growing at 1.5 percent annually. About 60 percent of the population is mixed Spanish and Indian. Thirty percent belongs to various Amerindian groups. Most of these are descendants of the Maya and Aztecs. About 9 percent is of European ancestry. Most Mexicans tend to identify with their Amerindian and Spanish heritage. Mexico City, the capital, is one of the largest cities in the world; its metropolitan area has a population of approximately 20 million. Guadalajara and Monterrey are also important financial and cultural centers.

Language. Spanish is the official language. The Spanish spoken in Mexico is somewhat unique in pronunciation and the use of idioms. One characteristic is the common use of diminutives: *chico* (small) becomes *chiquito*; *abuelo* (grandfather) becomes *abuelito*, etc. As many as one hundred Amerindian languages are still spoken in parts of Mexico, including Tzotzil and Tzeltal (Mayan dialects), Maya, Nahuatl (Aztec), Otomi, Zapotec, and Mixtec. Most people who speak an Amerindian language also speak at least some Spanish.

Religion. The majority of Mexicans (89 percent) are Roman Catholic, although many do not attend church services regularly. The Catholic Church has greatly influenced the culture, attitudes, and history of all Mexicans, and Catholic holidays are celebrated widely. The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Mexico and a national symbol. According to legend, she appeared several times to the Indian Juan Diego in December 1531. Other Christian churches are also active in Mexico; some are growing quite rapidly.

The Mexican constitution was drafted during the revolution in an attempt to transfer power from the Catholic Church to the people. Although it guaranteed freedom of worship, it banned religious instruction in public schools and public displays of worship and did not allow churches to own property or exist as legal entities. In 1992, the law was changed, endowing churches with more legal rights. Although government officials often ignored the previous restrictions, the new law relieves tension between the state and various religions—without forcing the government to endorse a specific church.

General Attitudes. Mexicans value friendship, humor, honesty, hard work, and personal honor. Power, wealth, family name, and education are all measures of social status. Mexicans also respect individuals who, regardless of level of education, use their ingenuity to solve daily problems. In rural areas, land is an important asset. *Machismo*, the ideal of a strong, forceful man, is still prevalent. The elderly are respected, particularly in Amerindian communities. Mexicans are patriotic and generally proud of their country, despite its challenges. They may call citizens of the United States *americanos* or *norteamericanos* but like to remind U.S. citizens that Mexico is also part of North America.

Mexicans traditionally have had a relaxed attitude toward

time, although this is changing in urban areas. Generally, they believe individuals are more important than schedules: people will stop to talk to unexpected visitors, regardless of other commitments.

Personal Appearance. Most Mexicans, especially in urban areas, wear clothing that is also common in the United States. Many indigenous groups wear traditional clothing—either daily or for festivals. In some areas, a man wears a wool poncho (*sarape*) over his shirt and pants when it is cold. He also may wear a wide-brimmed straw hat. Rural men and professional men in the north may wear cowboy hats, boots, and jeans. Rural women wear dresses or skirts, often covered by an apron. They may use a shawl (*rebozo*) to carry a child, cover the head or arms, or act as a coiled support for water buckets carried on the head. Fabric designs and colors can be characteristic of a specific region. Regardless of clothing style, color and beauty are features appreciated by all. People dress up for special occasions and parties.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. Mexicans usually greet with a handshake or nod of the head, although friends commonly embrace. Women often greet with a kiss on the cheek, and men may greet close female friends in the same way. Common verbal greetings include *¡Buenos días!* (Good morning), *¡Buenas tardes!* (Good afternoon), *¡Buenas noches!* (Good evening/night), and *¿Cómo está?* (How are you?). A casual greeting is *¡Hola!* (Hello). Mexican males often make *pirópos* (flattering personal comments) in passing to females, to which the females generally do not respond.

Mexicans commonly have more than one given name and two surnames (e.g., *José Luis Martínez Salinas*). The first surname comes from the father and the second from the mother. Coworkers address one another by professional title followed by the first surname (e.g., *Ingeniero Martínez*). Acquaintances or coworkers without a title are addressed as *Señor* (Mr.), *Señorita* (Miss), or *Señora* (Mrs.), followed by the first surname. Respected elders often are addressed as *Don* or *Doña*, followed by a given name.

Gestures. Mexicans typically stand close to each other while talking, sometimes touching their friend's clothing. They often use hand and arm gestures in conversation. Amerindians generally are more reserved, conversing with little physical contact and touching their mouth or cheek when they speak. A person can indicate "no" by shaking the hand from side to side with the index finger extended and palm outward. The "thumbs up" gesture expresses approval, but the "thumbs down" gesture is considered vulgar. Tossing items is offensive; one hands items directly to another person. If someone sneezes, a person may say *¡Salud!* (Health). If passing between conversing individuals is unavoidable, one says *Con permiso* (Excuse me). It is considered important to say *Gracias* (Thank you) for any favor or commercial service rendered.

Visiting. Mexicans are very hospitable. Unexpected visitors usually are welcomed and served refreshments such as juice or a soft drink. Refusing refreshments may be considered impolite. Unannounced visits are fairly common, but as more people get telephones, more are calling ahead. Mexicans enjoy conversing and socializing with relatives or friends. At a dinner party, the meal might not be served until after 8 p.m. because people work late and enjoy socializing before eating. Guests are expected to relax and do not offer to help the host unless it is evident some help is needed. They stay for conver-

sation rather than leave directly after the meal. On weekends, conversation may last until very late. On special occasions such as birthdays or Mother's Day, gifts are important and serenading is still popular (often in rural areas).

Eating. Although eating schedules vary, many Mexicans eat four daily meals: a light breakfast from 7 to 8 a.m., lunch between 10 to 11 a.m., and the main meal between 2 and 4 p.m.; the *cena* or *merienda* is a light snack at night. A main meal may consist of an entrée, soup or salad, main dish, and dessert (*postre*). Eating as a family is common. Urban professionals often eat meals at restaurants or street-side stands. Food purchased on the street usually is eaten at the stand. It is inappropriate for adults to eat while walking on the street. Spicy food is called *picante*, while hot (temperature) food is called *caliente*. *Picante* foods are often eaten with bland foods such as bread, tortillas, or rice to relieve the burning sensation. Many people also use a pinch of salt for relief. When eating, Mexicans keep both hands above the table. Some foods are eaten with utensils, others with the hand. Meals usually are not rushed. One should always ask to be excused when leaving a table or room.

LIFESTYLE

Family. Except in urban areas, where the trend is to have smaller families, Mexican families generally have more than three children. Family unity and responsibilities are high priorities. Divorce is relatively low, due in part to the dominance of the Catholic faith. In traditional families the father is the family leader and provides economic support, while the mother is responsible for domestic and child-care duties. However, more women are entering the formal workplace. Rural men and women often work together in the fields. A household, especially in rural areas, may include members of the extended family. Children generally live with their parents until they marry and sometimes after they marry.

Dating and Marriage. When dating, a young man often meets the young woman at a prearranged place rather than picking her up at her home. However, parental approval of the activity and the boyfriend is important. In some rural areas, it is considered a mark of poor character for a young woman to go out alone after dark, so a young man may call on her at home. Many people marry first in a civil ceremony and then in a church, following Catholic traditions. Wedding celebrations include music, dancing, games, and food. Common-law marriage is also practiced and recognized.

Diet. Staple foods include corn, beans, rice, and chilies. These typically are combined with spices, vegetables, and meats or fish. Some foods and dishes are regional, but others are common throughout the nation. Cornmeal or flour tortillas are eaten everywhere. Other common foods include *tortias* (hollow rolls stuffed with meat, cheese, or beans), *quesadillas* (tortillas baked or fried with cheese), *mole* (spicy sauce served with meat), and *tacos* (folded tortillas with meat or other filling). Popular soups include *pozole* (pork-and-hominy soup), *birria* (goat soup), and *menudo* (spicy tripe soup). *Enchiladas* are tortillas filled with meat and covered in a chili sauce. *Tamales* are cornmeal dough stuffed with meat, cheese, fruit, or other filling; they are wrapped in a corn husk or banana leaf and steamed. Popular "Mexican" foods and restaurants in the United States usually are very different from those found in Mexico.

Recreation. *Fútbol* (soccer) is the most popular sport in Mexico; the national team has competed in the last five World

Cups. Bullfighting draws the next highest number of spectators. Professional wrestling (*la lucha*) has a large following. Popular participation sports include baseball, basketball, tennis, and volleyball. Mexicans enjoy their own form of rodeo called *charreada*, which is often accompanied by a fair-like atmosphere. Many recreational activities include music and dancing. Daylong *fiestas* and weeklong festivals nearly always include fireworks, feasts, and bullfights. Watching television is a favorite leisure activity, especially in urban areas. *Telenovelas* (soap operas) are especially popular.

The Arts. Song and dance are integral to Mexican society. Originating in Mexico, *mariachi* music has found many international audiences. *Mariachi* bands vary in size but generally consist of a singer, violins, trumpets, and various guitars, such as the *vihuela*, a small five-string guitar, and the *guitarrón*, a six-string bass guitar. *Corridos*, songs that tell stories, and *ranchera* are other forms of traditional music. Mexico has become a major recording and distribution center for the Americas. Dancing, such as the *jarabe tapatio* (Mexican Hat Dance), often accompanies traditional music and *fiestas*.

Revolutionary themes dominated all types of art the first half of the century and remain important today. For example, brightly colored murals commissioned by the government in the 1920s and 1930s decorate many public buildings. Diego Rivera and other Mexican artists inspired muralist movements worldwide. Museums feature the art of ancient civilizations, such as ceramics and weavings, as well as fine art. Textiles, pottery, and silver work continue to be popular and can be seen in many markets.

Holidays. National public holidays include New Year's Day; Constitution Day (5 Feb.), which also marks the beginning of *Carnaval*, the week of parties and parades before Lent; Birthday of Benito Juárez (21 Mar.); Labor Day (1 May); *Cinco de Mayo* (5 May), which celebrates an 1862 victory over the French; Independence Day (16 Sept.), which is marked by a presidential address and *El grito* (the cry of freedom) on the evening of 15 September; Columbus Day (12 Oct.); Revolution Day (20 Nov.); and Christmas Day. Many offices close for a half day on Mother's Day (10 May), when schools sponsor special festivities.

Major religious holidays include St. Anthony's Day (17 Jan.), when children take their pets to church to be blessed; *Semana Santa* (Palm Sunday–Easter Sunday); Corpus Christi (May or June); and Assumption (15 Aug.). During the period known as *Día de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead (1–2 Nov.), families gather to celebrate life while they honor the dead, sweep graves, build special altars to honor the newly dead, and place items on graves to accompany spirits on their journey to heaven. Day of the Virgin Guadalupe (12 Dec.) and *Noche Buena* (Christmas Eve) are so popular that most offices and businesses honor them as public holidays. Christmas celebrations begin on 16 December with nightly parties (*posadas*) and end on Day of the Kings (6 Jan.), when most children in central and southern Mexico get their presents. Santa Claus is becoming more popular, especially in northern Mexico.

Commerce. Businesses generally are open from 9 a.m. to 6 or 7 p.m., although many shops in smaller towns close between 2 and 4 p.m. for the midday meal, particularly in hotter areas. Legislation passed in March 1999 prohibits government workers from taking the traditional afternoon *siesta* break by limiting their lunches to one hour and not allowing them to work after 6 p.m. Private companies may offer midday breaks at their own discretion. Business contacts often are made during

Mexico

lunch breaks. These are largely social meetings, with business conducted in the last few minutes. Urban residents buy basic goods in supermarkets and smaller neighborhood stores. Street vendors and open-air markets are common and often open to bargaining. In rural areas, weekly market days provide foods and other goods. Government offices usually close by 4 p.m. Standard banking hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SOCIETY

Government. Mexico's federal republic of 31 states operates under a central government led by a directly elected president (currently Vicente Fox). While states technically are autonomous, the central government controls sectors such as education, security, and national industries. A president can serve only one six-year term, and a legislator cannot serve two consecutive terms. The legislature is composed of a 128-seat Senate and 500-seat Chamber of Deputies. Voting is compulsory (but not enforced) for adults 18 and older.

Economy. The two most important industries, mining and petroleum, employ less than 2 percent of the labor force. Pemex, the government-owned petroleum company, is one of the world's largest oil companies. Tourism earns foreign exchange and provides employment for many. In addition to oil, Mexico exports coffee, agricultural products, and engines. Agricultural pursuits employ one-quarter of the labor force. Major crops include corn, cotton, wheat, coffee, sugarcane, sorghum, oilseed, and vegetables. Mexico is also a major supplier of marijuana; efforts to stem the drug trade have been significant but very costly.

Export industries have enjoyed strong growth since 1993, when Mexico signed NAFTA with the United States and Canada. NAFTA lowered trade barriers and led to an increased number of *maquiladoras* (border industries), where U.S. investment employs Mexican labor. Mexico has made free trade agreements with the European Union, much of Central America, and Israel.

Most Mexicans have access to basic resources and opportunities to make choices in their lives; however, access varies widely between regions and ethnic groups. Economic opportunities have not improved proportionally among the indigenous, rural, and southern populations. Many are poor, and about 10 percent of the population lacks access to the health care, education, and economic opportunities needed to rise above human poverty.* The currency is the Mexican *peso* (Mex\$).

Transportation and Communications. Personal cars are common in urban areas, but the majority of Mexicans rely on public transportation. Buses and minibuses are plentiful and inexpensive. Mexico City has a fine subway system. Taxis are numerous, but many operate illegally. The highway system has grown steadily over the last decade, and Mexico has an extensive system of roads, although many remain unpaved or semi-paved. Most people use the sophisticated private bus system for intercity travel. There are several domestic airlines. Communications are well developed and modern, although many rural families do not have telephones in their homes. Numerous radio and television stations and several daily newspapers serve the public.

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	51 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	49 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$8,297
Adult literacy rate	93 percent (male); 89 (female)
Infant mortality rate	25 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	70 (male); 76 (female)

Education. Education is compulsory and free between ages six and fifteen. However, attendance is not enforced and schools may require that students pay some fees. After six years of primary education and three years of basic secondary education, students may enter one of two tracks: preuniversity education (three years) or a technical education program (two to three years). Obtaining a university degree takes from three to seven years. The essentially free National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) is prestigious; only one-third of all applicants pass its entrance exams. Enrollment has increased rapidly in the last decade. The literacy rate is much lower among indigenous and rural populations.

Health. By law, all citizens have access to medical services free of charge at government-operated facilities. Medical facilities are good in large cities but limited in rural areas. Sanitation and access to safe water are problems in some regions. Air pollution is a serious problem in big cities, and water pollution in many regions.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- Mexico's economy shrank by 0.2 percent in 2001. Annual inflation was more than 6 percent.
- In 2001, a special prosecutor was appointed by President Fox to investigate the disappearance and torture of left-wing activists during the 1970s and 1980s. State officials were allegedly involved.
- In an attempt to rescue the country's sugar industry from bankruptcy, the Mexican government re-nationalized more than two dozen sugar mills in 2001.
- Deforestation in Mexico is taking place at a rate of more than 3,861 square miles (10,000 square kilometers) annually, the second highest rate in the world. Economic deprivation and corruption contribute to the problem.
- Since taking office, Fox has made substantial progress with the EZLN. In early 2001, Zapatista leaders marched to the capital to voice their demands. Fox pulled troops out of Chiapas and released political prisoners.

Contact Information. Mexican Government Tourist Office, phone (800) 44-MEXICO; Web site www.visitmexico.com. Embassy of Mexico, 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20006; phone (202) 728-1600; Web site <http://207.224.13.65/english>.



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▶ SOUTH AMERICA

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. With 439,736 square miles (1,138,910 square kilometers), Colombia is about the size of California and Texas combined. It is located at the juncture between Central and South America and features an extremely diverse landscape. Divided by three branches of the Andes Mountains, Colombia has low coastal plains on the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean; cool mountain plateaus, valleys, and active volcanoes in the central Región Andina; and an eastern region with plains in the north and tropical jungle in the south. The country also includes several islands. While minor earthquakes are fairly common in Colombia, periodic, more serious tremors have also taken their toll.

There are no distinct seasons in Colombia, but differing elevations experience a variety of temperatures. Medellín at 5,000 feet (1,524 meters) above sea level averages 70°F (21°C), while Bogotá, the capital, at 8,000 feet (2,438 meters) averages 55°F (13°C). The coast is hot and humid. With such diversity in temperature, altitude, and rainfall, Colombia produces an incredible variety and abundance of vegetation and animal life. Middle Eastern coffee seeds, brought to Colombia by Spanish missionaries, found a perfect climate in Colombia. Coffee is one of the country's most important export crops.

History. The history of Colombia before the arrival of Europeans is uncertain, but many groups thrived in the area, producing sophisticated art, stone, and gold work. Chibcha, Carib, Arawak, Tairona, and Muisca peoples were present when the Spanish began settling the region in the 1500s. The area was soon part of New Granada, which also encompassed present-day Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama. Resentment against Spanish rule grew in the late 1700s until 1810, when nationalists claimed independence. However, independence was not

really achieved until Simón Bolívar assembled an army to defeat Spanish troops at the Battle of Boyacá in 1819. He established the new *Gran Colombia* republic, from which Venezuela and Ecuador withdrew in 1830. With U.S. support, Panama declared itself independent in 1903 to make way for construction of the Panama Canal.

Colombia's name, originally the State of New Granada, changed several times before it became the Republic of Colombia. Civil war (*La Violencia*) between conservatives and liberals from 1948 to 1957 led to a constitutional amendment requiring the presidency to alternate between the Liberal and Conservative Parties until 1974. Fully competitive elections have been held since that time.

The Medellín and Cali drug cartels and various guerrilla movements, such as M-19, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and National Liberation Army (ELN), began in the 1980s to cause unrest and violence. Some guerrilla factions eventually joined the democratic process in the 1990 presidential elections. Although drug traffickers killed several presidential candidates and committed violent acts to dissuade Colombians from voting, elections were held and César Gaviria Trujillo was elected president.

Gaviria took a solid stand against drug trafficking and violence. However, to encourage peace, he offered guerrilla groups the right to participate in a constitutional convention if they would disarm and renounce violence. Most groups accepted the offer and began participating in the political process. Gaviria also offered drug traffickers leniency and certain rights if they would confess and renounce their crimes. Not all guerrillas and drug traffickers cooperated with the government, but the violence did diminish for a short time.

In 1990, a national assembly—including indigenous groups, guerrilla organizations, and nontraditional political parties—was formed to rewrite the 1886 constitution. The new constitution, which encourages political pluralism, the rule of law, and special rights for the long-ignored indigenous and black populations, took effect on 4 July 1991.

Elections in 1994 awarded Ernesto Samper Pizano of the Liberal Party a four-year presidential term. However, calls for impeachment came after Samper was accused of receiving campaign funds from the Cali drug cartel. Congress absolved Samper of wrongdoing in June 1996, but speculation about his guilt persisted. The scandal damaged the government's credibility, contributing to an economic downturn and escalated violence among guerrillas, drug cartels, paramilitary antiguerrilla groups, and the military. Thousands of people—many of them civilians—have died by violence from these groups. Much of the killing, kidnapping, and extortion involves drug-related lands and moneys. In 1998, the government withdrew thousands of troops and police from the southeast, a FARC stronghold, to meet FARC's precondition for peace talks. Nevertheless, the peace talks faltered, bombings and attacks by guerrilla groups continued, and the government repealed FARC's safe haven. The violence continues to escalate and has now reached the level of all-out war.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Colombia's population of about 40.3 million is growing at 1.6 percent annually. The majority of Colombians live in the west; much of the southeast is covered by jungle. The growth rate has been decreasing as Colombians flee the drugs and violence; approximately 10 percent of the population lives outside of Colombia. People of mixed Spanish, indigenous, and sometimes black origins compose 58 percent of the population. Caucasians account for 20 percent. Others include a black-Caucasian mix (14 percent), black (4), an indigenous-black mix (3), and indigenous (1). Blacks are descendants of African slaves imported during the Spanish colonial era. Many mixed with other peoples, especially after slavery was abolished in 1851. Blacks generally live along the coasts, comprising the majority of some large cities, including Quibdó. The largest metropolitan areas are Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali. Approximately 75 percent of the population lives in urban areas, and about one-third of the population is younger than age 15.

Language. The majority of Colombians speak Spanish, the country's official language. Most indigenous ethnic groups have their own languages. Among 80 groups, 40 languages are spoken. Dialects spoken by some blacks reflect their African roots. Natives of the San Andrés and Providencia Islands in the Caribbean speak Creole. Ethnic languages and dialects share official status with Spanish in certain areas, where formal education must be bilingual.

Religion. While Colombia's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, nearly 90 percent of the people belong to the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant and other Christian organizations have small growing memberships. Many indigenous and black peoples retain beliefs from non-Christian, traditional worship systems. Although society is becoming more secularized, Catholicism remains an important cultural influence. For example, Catholic religious instruction, though no longer mandatory, still takes place in most public schools. Colombians commonly express their faith with phrases like *Si Dios quiere* (God willing) and *Que sea lo que Dios quiera*

(Whatever God wills).

General Attitudes. Colombians take pride in their rich and diverse culture. The country's various geographic regions, climates, and subcultures enrich its food, music, dance, and art. Colombians are also proud of their *rumbero* spirit—their ability to both work and play hard. The family is a great source of pride, and family solidarity and mutual support are important. The individual is also important and takes precedence over timetables and punctuality. Colombians value honesty, loyalty, a good sense of humor, and education. They find selfishness, arrogance, and dishonesty distasteful.

Colombians may seem somewhat cynical and suspicious of outsiders. However, an initial lack of trust is more a survival skill than a lack of courtesy. Gaining someone's trust often requires guarantees and manifestations of good faith. Colombians are proud of their history of democracy and independence. They may be critical of their own social problems but do not appreciate outside interference or criticism. While minorities traditionally have been marginalized, the new constitution embodies people's hopes for equal treatment and opportunity for all. Colombians are forward-looking and confident they can overcome their challenges. They take pride in the fact that, despite violence and political turmoil, Colombia's human and natural resources have allowed the country to reach high levels of economic development.

Personal Appearance. In Colombia, clothing is conservative, clean, and well kept. Appropriate attire for each occasion is essential. In urban areas, men wear suits, white shirts, and ties. In cities nearer the coast, suits generally are lighter in color. Women wear comfortable dresses, and urban youth dress casually. Dress in rural areas is less fashionable, but the people wear neat, clean clothing. Indigenous peoples often wear traditional clothing, which can include wraparound dresses, bowler hats, and *ponchos*.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. Men commonly shake hands (not too vigorously) with everyone when entering a home, greeting a group, or leaving. Women kiss each other on the cheek if they are acquainted but offer a verbal greeting or handshake otherwise. Close friends or relatives may greet each other with an *abrazo* (hug), sometimes accompanied by a kiss on the cheek. Youth of the opposite sex and young girls will also kiss each other on the cheek. It is customary to address people by a title (*Señor*, *Señora*, *Doctor*, etc.), rather than their first name, when being introduced. Common greetings include *¡Buenos días!* (Good morning), *¡Buenas tardes!* (Good afternoon), *¡Buenas noches!* (Good evening), and *¿Cómo está?* (How are you?). *¡Hasta luego!* and, less formally, *¡Chao!* and *¡Nos vemos!* are popular parting phrases. People answer the phone with *¡A la orden!* (May I help you?). Colombians commonly have two family names: the last name is the mother's family name and the second-to-last name is the father's family name. The father's family name is the official surname. Therefore, a person named José Muñoz Gómez would be called *Señor Muñoz*.

Gestures. During conversation, Colombians tend to be expressive with their hands and face, particularly if the discussion becomes animated or heated. Maintaining eye contact and standing close are important; interrupting or backing away from the other person is considered rude. People beckon others with the palm down, waving the fingers or the whole hand. Smiling is an important gesture of goodwill. Colombian males may show deference and respect to women and the elderly by

forfeiting seats, opening doors, or offering other assistance.

Visiting. While visiting is an important part of Colombian culture, customs vary with ethnic group and region. For example, in smaller towns with warm climates, people often sit on their porches and converse with passersby. Friends and relatives may visit unannounced, especially in rural areas where telephones are not widely available, but otherwise it is polite to make arrangements in advance. Colombian hosts are gracious and attempt to make guests feel comfortable, usually offering refreshments such as coffee, fruit juice, or soft drinks. Dinner guests generally arrive at least a few, and often 30 or more, minutes late. They may bring a small gift to the hosts, but this is not expected. Hosts commonly offer dinner guests an alcoholic beverage (rum, beer, etc.) before and after dinner. Politeness and etiquette are emphasized in Colombia. During formal visits, guests wait to sit until the hosts direct them to a seat. It is improper to put one's feet on furniture when visiting. Hosts often accompany departing guests out the door and even down the street.

Eating. Good manners and courtesy when eating are important to Colombians. Pleasant conversation is welcome at the table, as it stimulates a feeling of goodwill. Overeating is impolite; a host may offer more helpings, but these should be politely refused. Many consider it important to keep hands above the table. In a group, it is impolite to take anything to eat without first offering it to others. Eating on the street is improper. Toothpicks, if used at all, are used discreetly. In restaurants, leaving a 10 percent tip is customary.

LIFESTYLE

Family. Family unity and support are important to Colombians, and family members share their good fortunes with one another. Traditional values still strongly influence family relations. Divorce is relatively uncommon, due largely to the influence of the Catholic Church. The typical family unit consists of a mother, father, and two to four children. The father feels an obligation to provide for his family, and the mother is responsible for most domestic duties. However, an increasing number of women also work outside the home; more than one-third of the labor force is female. Children traditionally live with their parents until they marry, but more university students and young businesspeople are leaving home earlier. Adult children often care for a widowed parent. Upper-class families enjoy many modern conveniences, but most Colombians lead simpler lives. More than half of the population lives below the poverty line. As Colombia becomes more urbanized, apartments are becoming more popular than single-family dwellings.

Dating and Marriage. Depending on family custom, dating begins around age 14 or 15. Urban youth may begin dating at a younger age. Popular activities include going to parties, restaurants, movies, and discos; shopping at the mall; and participating in sports. On the night before a wedding, the groom may hire a small band to serenade the bride. Marriage ceremonies generally follow Catholic traditions, including a mass. A reception, with music and dancing, follows at a club, restaurant, or home. Common-law marriages are gaining acceptance in Colombia.

Diet. Breakfast foods vary by region, including juice, coffee, hot chocolate, fruit, eggs, bread, or *changua* (potato-and-egg soup). A small midmorning *merienda* (snack) may consist of *empanadas* (meat turnovers) or bread and a drink. Lunch, usually between noon and 2 p.m., is the main meal of the day. In

smaller cities and towns, the family may gather (many businesses close) for the meal. Eating the main meal in the evenings is a trend in urban areas. Supper is usually at 7 or 8 p.m. Staple foods include soup, rice, meat, potatoes, salad, and beans. *Arroz con pollo* (chicken with rice), *frijoles con chicharrón* (pork and beans), and *sancocho* (stew with fish or meat and vegetables) are popular national dishes. *Arepa* is a cornmeal pancake. Coffee is the favorite drink of many. Sugar and milk are primary ingredients in popular sweets and desserts like *arequipe* (caramel sauce) and *arroz de coco* (rice pudding with coconut and rum). Ice cream is a common Sunday treat.

Recreation. *Fútbol* (soccer) is the most popular sport in Colombia, particularly among men. Other favorite sports include cycle racing, swimming, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, and baseball. Attending bullfights is also popular. Colombians enjoy participating in the country's many festivals and joining with friends and family there to talk, dance, and laugh. Visiting is another favorite pastime. People socialize in their homes, in restaurants, or while strolling down city streets.

The Arts. Music and dance are central to Colombian culture. Much music is influenced by African or indigenous styles. Tropical rhythms are popular, including salsa, *merengue*, and *vallenato*. The *cumbia*, of African-Colombian roots, is a favorite style of music that began along the Atlantic Coast. The *bambuco*, from the Andes, is the national song and dance. Classical music is appreciated as well, and many people frequent the orchestras scattered throughout the country. Literature is important to Colombians, and many people take great pride in Gabriel García Márquez, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1982.

Elaborate gold work is a legacy of the early indigenous peoples. Today's Colombian artists weave hammocks, sashes, bags, and blue and red *ruanas* (wool shawls). They also produce ceramics and decorative trim, called *passementerie*, for clothing or furniture.

Holidays. Holidays in Colombia include New Year's Day; Epiphany (6 Jan.); St. Joseph's Day (19 Mar.); Easter; Labor Day (1 May); Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul (29 June); Independence Day (20 July); Battle of Boyacá (7 Aug.); Assumption Day (15 Aug.); *Día de la Raza* (12 Oct.), which celebrates the discovery of the Americas and the resulting mix of ethnicities; All Saints' Day (1 Nov.); Independence of Cartagena (11 Nov.); and Christmas. Cities and towns also sponsor annual local festivals.

The nine days before Christmas (*la novena*) are marked by religious observances and parties. On Christmas Eve, families eat a large dinner, pray around *el pesebre* (the nativity), sing Christmas carols, and exchange gifts. Children receive gifts from the baby Jesus on Christmas Day.

Commerce. The Colombian workweek is basically 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Shops open from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with some closing early on Saturday. Shops in larger cities may stay open later. Many urbanites buy basic goods at supermarkets. Open-air and farmers' markets also sell fresh produce at cheaper prices. Banks generally close at 4 p.m., but some offer extended service.

SOCIETY

Government. The Republic of Colombia has a bicameral Congress: the Senate has 102 seats and the Chamber of Representatives has 161 seats. Senators are elected in a national vote, while representatives are elected regionally. President Alvaro Uribe is chief of state and head of government. The president

and cabinet form the executive branch. The judicial branch is independent. The major political parties are the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, although increasing frustration with escalating violence has opened political possibilities for independent candidates. All citizens may vote at age 18. Colombia has 32 states (*departamentos*).

Economy. Agriculture plays a key role in Colombia's economy. Coffee accounts for a little less than one-third of all export earnings; freshly cut flowers and bananas are also important exports. Other agricultural products include sugarcane, cotton, rice, tobacco, and corn. Oil is surpassing coffee as the country's main legal export. Natural gas, coal, iron ore, nickel, gold, copper, textiles, and chemicals all contribute to the economy. More than 90 percent of the world's emeralds are mined in Colombia. With about half of the country covered by forests and woodlands, the timber industry is becoming important. Colombia produces 80 percent of the world's cocaine and 60 percent of the heroin sold in the United States, but drug earnings remain in the hands of relatively few. The currency is the Colombian *peso* (Col\$).

Free-market policies during the past decades have led to high rates of foreign investment and solid growth for Colombia. Its people are proud of the fact that they are current on all foreign debt payments and have never defaulted. While the country has had a reputation for sound economic management, it is challenged by decaying infrastructure, illegal drug trade, and violence. Unemployment has grown to about 20 percent, and the economy has struggled with recession. However, inflation has decreased to its lowest levels in 30 years. Rural poverty and an unequal distribution of income remain serious problems. Economic opportunities are more accessible to the middle class. About 9 percent of the population lacks access to health care, education, and economic prosperity needed to rise above human poverty.*

Transportation and Communications. People in urban areas generally use public transportation, including buses, minibuses (*colectivos*), and taxis. A minority of people own cars; some use bicycles and motorcycles. Bus service is the most common link between cities, but air-passenger travel is on the rise. While road construction has increased, only about 25 percent of all highways are paved and many are in poor condition; irregular terrain makes construction and maintenance costly. Coasts on two oceans provide shipping access to world markets. Colombia's television and radio infrastructure is government-owned, but stations are privately operated. The country's free press has played a role in investigating and protesting corruption and terrorist violence.

Education. Primary education is compulsory and is free in public schools; many schools are private. Colombia's literacy rate has risen substantially due to an increased number of rural schools; unfortunately, it remains only about 40 percent among the indigenous and black populations. Approximately 75 percent of all students complete primary education (five years) and continue to the secondary level (six years). Secondary schools are found in most municipalities and offer either technical or academic tracks; many are private. Vocational schools and universities are located in major cities. Bogotá has 5 major universities. Scholarly achievement has been impor-

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	62 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	56 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$6,200
Adult literacy rate	92 percent (male); 92 (female)
Infant mortality rate	24 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	67 (male); 75 (female)

tant throughout Colombia's history.

Health. Colombia's health-care system is changing from a public to a mixed (public and private) system. Individuals who can afford it usually seek private care. Private clinics and public or charity hospitals are available in cities but are lacking in rural areas. Urban facilities are better equipped. As many tropical diseases have been eradicated, life expectancy has risen; however, malaria and yellow fever still affect rural and tropical regions, and tap water is often not safe for drinking. Sanitation remains a problem in rural areas. Infant mortality is significantly higher and life expectancy is lower among black and indigenous peoples. Violence remains the leading cause of death in Colombia.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- In February 2002, peace talks between FARC military commanders and former president Andrés Pastrana broke down. Pastrana ordered the rebel forces to evacuate FARC's safe haven and declared the area a war zone. Fighting is being taken more into the cities, and innocent civilians are often caught in the cross fire between right-wing paramilitaries and left-wing guerrillas. FARC forces control approximately 40 percent of the country.
- Alvaro Uribe, of the Colombia Always party, won the 2002 presidential elections with more than 50 percent of the vote, thus precluding the need for a runoff election. His main campaign promise was to use military force to bring the guerrillas to peace talks. After his electoral win, he called upon the United Nations and the United States to increase their involvement in the peace process and in the fight against drugs.
- Although the U.S. government has given more than one billion dollars to Colombia for the war against drugs, Colombia's drug production increased in 2001. Colombian leaders have asked the United States to allow U.S. aid targeted for the war against drugs to be used in the fight against guerrilla rebels. Due to the link between drug traffickers and guerrilla forces, the Colombian government is hoping that as the guerrilla forces are eliminated, drug production will decrease.

Contact Information. Embassy of Colombia, Consular Section, 2118 Leroy Place NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 387-8338; Web site www.colombiaemb.org.



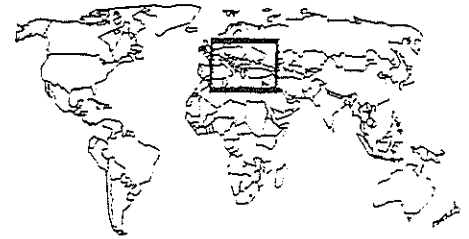
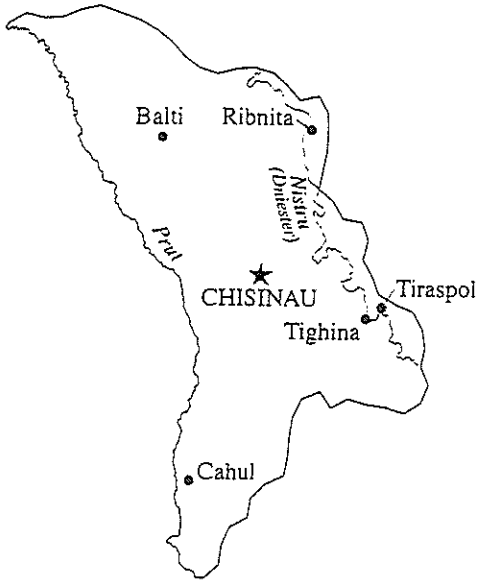
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▶ EUROPE

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BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Moldova, the second smallest former Soviet republic, covers 13,010 square miles (33,700 square kilometers) in southeastern Europe. The two largest rivers are the Dniester and the Prut. The Prut River defines Moldova's border with Romania, and the Nistru (Dniester) River flows north to south in the east. Both rivers drain into the Black Sea. Moldova's rolling steppe and rich black soil allow for 50 percent of the territory to support agriculture. There are few forests; ancient woodlands were plowed under for farming. Moldova faces significant environmental problems. The heavy use of agricultural chemicals, particularly during the Soviet era, caused soil and groundwater contamination.

Moldova's climate is characterized by cold winters and warm summers. Average winter temperatures hover around freezing, while summers average between 70°F and 80°F (21–26°C). Humidity intensifies both cold and warm temperatures. The south is slightly warmer than the north. Rainfall is variable but can be heavy in the summer. Precipitation tends to be lighter in the south. Dry spells are not uncommon, and crop irrigation is necessary in some areas.

History. Known in centuries past as Basarabia, the main area now occupied by Moldova has had a long, troubled history of shifting borders and foreign domination. In 1359, it was incorporated into a principality called Moldavia. Basarabia became a tributary state to the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. In 1792, Turkey ceded land on the Nistru River's east bank (now called Transnistria) to Russia. Then, following the Russo-Turkish War (1806–12), Russia annexed Basarabia as well.

With the exception of small territorial shifts in 1859 and 1878, the region remained as is until Russia's Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. In March 1918, Basarabia's ethnic Romanian

majority (between the Prut and Nistru Rivers) voted to unite with Romania, with which they shared cultural and historical (pre-Turkish) roots. The new Soviet government opposed such a union and established, in 1924, the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in Transnistria.

Basarabia was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, reoccupied by Romania until 1944, and later fully incorporated into the Soviet Empire as the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. Some districts were transferred to Ukraine.

Freedoms introduced by Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s allowed Moldavia to join other republics in a quest for independence. Elections in 1990 brought the Moldovan Popular Front to power, forcing out the Communists and leading to Moldavia's 1991 declaration of independence as the Republic of Moldova. The new country was immediately beset with ethnic divisions, economic chaos, and extremist political tendencies. The Popular Front, prior to independence, had severely alienated ethnic Russians in Transnistria (and elsewhere) and ethnic Gagauzi in the south by introducing legislation to effectively marginalize minorities in the new state. The two minorities declared their independence. In Transnistria (called Dnestr by ethnic Russians), the situation erupted into open civil war in 1992. Russian troops participated and then helped establish a cease-fire. The Popular Front and political parties polarized and factionalized, leading to parliamentary gridlock. A 1993 vote disbanded Parliament.

In February 1994, a new, smaller Parliament was elected. Several parties posted candidates, but those (such as Popular Front) strongly advocating unification with Romania or suppression of ethnic minorities were defeated by more moderate groups (primarily the Agrarian and Socialist Parties). The new

1 amendment quickly ratified a new constitution that proclaimed Moldovan neutrality and guaranteed minorities their rights. Additional political, constitutional, and economic reforms were implemented.

In 1994, the government signed an agreement with Russia over the eventual withdrawal of its troops from Transnistria. Moldova's moderate leaders extended greater autonomy to both separatist regions while maintaining Moldovan sovereignty. A "republic within Moldova" status was accepted in 1996 by Transnistria leaders and Russia. President Petru Lucinschi, who was elected in December 1996, continued efforts to normalize Moldovan relations with Transnistria. A peace accord with Dniester separatists was signed in Moscow in May 1997.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Moldova's population of 4.43 million is not growing. Roughly 64 percent of the people are ethnic Moldovans (of Romanian descent). Ukrainians (13.8 percent) and Russians (13) are the largest minorities. They tend to live in cities and in Transnistria. The Gagauzi (3.5 percent), a Turkic people of Orthodox faith, live in southern Moldova. Moldova is also home to some ethnic Bulgarians (2 percent) and smaller groups. The capital of Chisinau is home to more than 750,000 people. Tiraspol (186,000 residents), Balti (164,000), and Tighina (141,000) are the next largest cities. Fifty-four percent of the population is urban and 46 percent is rural.

Language. During the Soviet era, Russian was the official state language, and Romanian, the language of ethnic Moldovans, had to be written in the Cyrillic alphabet. In 1994, Romanian (Moldovan) was declared the sole official language, and efforts were implemented to help schools, businesses, and government shift to using Romanian and the Latin alphabet. The transition is necessarily slow and costly, and Russian is still heavily used in urban areas, especially among minorities.

By law, non-Romanian speakers have six years to learn Romanian as a condition of their continued employment. Flexibility exists if the six-year target is unreachable. Ethnic minorities may continue to speak their own languages. Bulgarians and Gagauzi also generally speak Russian.

Religion. Most people in Moldova are Eastern Orthodox Christians. There are small populations of Jews (1.5 percent), Evangelical Protestants, and Roman Catholics. The practice of religion was repressed during the Soviet era, but people are now rebuilding their churches, attending services, and celebrating religious holidays. Religious devotion is rising, and religion is expected to play a greater role in the society's future.

General Attitudes. Moldovans value strong personal relationships with friends and relatives. Educated persons are respected above others, including the wealthy, as education generally is not associated with wealth. Material possessions are increasingly desired, which has given rise to greater corruption but also has encouraged private enterprise. Moldovans appreciate their agricultural heritage and tend to be politically and socially conservative. They are cautious toward people they do not know but warm and trusting with good friends. Moldovans tend to be pessimistic about their individual circumstances; even if they are inwardly optimistic, they more readily express doubts before hopes.

As with many newly created countries, Moldova's hardships and social upheaval have confused people's attitudes toward society's goals. Those who initially favored unification with

Romania were disappointed by the feeling in Romania that Moldovans had lost their "Romanian-ness" and that Russian influence remains strong. In 1992, however, the presidents of Moldova and Romania agreed to pursue a balanced policy between their countries. Many Moldovans have been disappointed by the economic hardships of transition. People's perceptions are strongly influenced by political and economic trends, both of which are changing rapidly.

Personal Appearance. Moldovans wear their best clothing in public. Women wear dresses or skirts and high heels. Young women prefer flashy outfits, jewelry, and considerable makeup. Urban youth favor jeans and T-shirts. Urban professional men wear suits with ties. Urban men otherwise wear sweat suits and tennis shoes; jewelry indicates their social status. Rural men often wear older suit coats with sweaters. Older rural women (*batrana*) wear scarves on their heads, a practice that originally denoted one's marital status (unmarried women did not wear scarves). Men often wear fur hats in colder weather.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. Urban Moldovans generally shake hands when they greet, although a man waits for a woman to extend her hand first. In mixed company, a man shakes a woman's hand before another man's. Good friends and relatives often hug as well. Rural Moldovan men, and increasingly urban ethnic Moldovan men, greet a woman by kissing her on the hand and saying *Sarut mana* (I kiss your hand). Other verbal greetings include *Buna Ziua* (Good day), *Ce mai facetz* (How do you do?), *Noroc* (Cheers, meaning "Hi"), and the Russian *Privet* (Hi) or *Zdravstvuite* (Hello). "Good-bye" is *La revedere*.

When addressing others, young people generally use first names. Adults use titles (*Domnul* for "Mr.," *Doamna* for "Mrs.," *Domisoara* for "Miss") with the family name for all but close friends and relatives. Some adults introduce themselves by first name and patronymic (e.g., Ion Petru), often preceded by the family name (e.g., Ciorbu Ion Petru). A patronymic is formed by the possessive of the father's first name. Use of this Russian custom is decreasing. Urban people do not greet people they do not know and rarely smile (as a greeting) at strangers on the street. Rural people are more likely to greet strangers. A young woman is called a "girl," since the term "woman" is considered an insult that implies the person is old or married.

Gestures. Moldovans generally do not point with the index finger; they prefer using the open hand. It is impolite to put feet on furniture, cross legs in front of elders, or chew gum while speaking. Eating while walking in public is rude, unless one is eating ice cream or *pirozhi* (a stuffed pastry). Society generally frowns on public displays of affection. Moldovan men usually remove their hats when entering a building or home. It is rude for men not to open doors for women or to neglect other such chivalrous acts.

Visiting. Most socializing takes place at home. Visitors remove their shoes at the door before entering. On special occasions, guests are treated to large meals. Otherwise, people sit in the kitchen or living room to chat for hours. Hosts generally provide guests with something to drink (coffee, tea, wine, cognac, etc.). Vodka is popular among ethnic Russians. Close friends and family feel comfortable visiting without prior arrangement, but a telephone call among those with phones usually is appreciated. If visitors plan to stay only a few minutes, they indicate this upon arrival so as not to make the hosts feel their

impone not to take at least flowers to people on special occasions or holidays. Hosts, especially in rural areas, usually reciprocate with a small gift (cake "for the next morning" or wine). Foreign visitors, especially U.S. Americans, are considered honored guests and are treated to the family's best.

ating. The urban breakfast is usually light, consisting of open sandwiches with sausage or cheese, coffee or tea, and fruit preserves. Rural people often eat more substantial meals of *kasha* (hot porridge), potatoes, bread, and sheep cheese. Indeed, breakfast can be the main meal, as the rest of the day is spent farming. Lunch and dinner are light. On weekends, however, lunch is the main meal. The urban lunch is generally the main meal, consisting of soup, salad, and an entrée. For dinner, people eat only an entrée, though it is not necessarily light. Children at elementary schools usually have an afternoon "tea" (juice and a sweet roll). Coffee and juice are common beverages among urban people, while rural people drink wine, tea, juice, milk, or stewed fruit. Ice is almost never served with drinks, as cold drinks are considered unhealthy.

Food is prepared by women; it is considered embarrassing for a man to admit he cooks. Food is served from the middle of the table; each person takes his or her portion from serving dishes. Urban Moldovans eat with the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right. They keep the hands and forearms above the table throughout the meal. Hosts offer guests additional helpings at least three or four times. Initially declined, the food should then be accepted. One is expected to eat everything on the plate; the presence of leftovers is considered a sign that guests did not like the food.

Moldovans rarely eat at restaurants, which are expensive, except during vacations and for business functions. Families go out for ice cream, coffee, or dessert. When one does eat out, the host pays the bill; tips are not given.

LIFESTYLE

Family. Moldovans value their families. They often marry early in life because of their rural lifestyle and because young people want to be treated as adults. Urban families usually have only one or two children, while rural families may have three or more. Children remain close to their parents throughout life. Young urban couples often have difficulty finding housing, so they usually move in with the bride's parents. Hence, many families have two or three generations living in a small one- or two-bedroom apartment. Rural extended families share a larger home, but they often lack modern conveniences (such as running water). Gender roles are defined clearly, especially in the countryside. Men lead the family, work the fields and raise livestock, or have a wage-earning job. Women are responsible for all household chores and child care, as well as farm work, if applicable. A successful career is less important for a woman than being a good cook and housekeeper, but more women are also becoming merchants, selling at outdoor markets goods they produce or buy in Romania and other countries.

Dating and Marriage. Young people date with the goal of getting married. They go to movies or for walks in the park, watch videos, and dance at large holiday or birthday parties. Couples marry at a "wedding palace," the Soviet-era office where the only legal weddings could be held. Today, many get married in a church first and then go to the "wedding palace" for the civil ceremony. Fall is the most popular time for a wedding

now a wife and a mature woman. The veil is given to the maid of honor, who is expected to marry next. Wedding guests usually stay through the morning and sometimes for an entire weekend. Divorce is common, but second marriages are not. Women with children find it hard to remarry.

Diet. Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian cuisine are all part of the Moldovan diet. The most common soup eaten at lunch is *borscht* (made of tomato juice and beets). Meat, bread, potatoes, and vegetables are staples for the main meal. Bread is served with most meals; wine is served with lunch and dinner. Traditional Moldovan dishes include *mamaliga* (cornmeal mush that resembles pudding) with *brânza* (sheep cheese), *mititei* (grilled meat sausages), fried onions with sour cream, and *placinte* (flaky stuffed pastry). Garlic, onions, and herbs are used in cooking many foods. Fruits (apples, grapes, plums, cherries, strawberries, watermelon, and tomatoes) are eaten in season. Typical vegetables are eggplant, peppers, cabbage, and potatoes. As fresh produce is expensive for urban dwellers, many families have gardens on the outskirts of town. All meats are popular but expensive; chicken and pork are most affordable.

Recreation. In their leisure time, Moldovans visit, go to movies, or read. Soccer is the most popular sport. Chess is also a favorite pastime. Some enjoy basketball. A small number of urban adults jog or exercise. Public exercise and swimming facilities are available but need repair.

The Arts. Moldovans love music and art. Folk music is popular at national festivals. Common instruments include the violin, flute, accordion, and *cembalo* (harpsichord). The *Miorita* is a well-known ballad. Moldova is home to several professional theaters, including the Licurici Republic Puppet Theater. Ceramics, carpet making, wood carving, basketwork, and weaving are common crafts.

During the Soviet period, the government controlled the arts. Artists were pressured to produce works that glorified communism. In more recent years, artists have had more freedom to express themselves and have been experimenting with new materials, techniques, and styles.

Holidays. New Year's Day is a favorite day for decorating trees and for children to go to parties with *Mos Craciun* (Santa Claus) and *Alba-ca-Zapada* (his granddaughter, Snow White). Adults enjoy New Year's Eve parties with family and friends. At the beginning of the new year, people greet each other with *La multi ani* (Happy New Year). Christmas (7 Jan.) is only now being revived after a ban under the Soviets. People are rediscovering a rich tradition of caroling, folklore, trees, ornaments, and gifts. Some of the nonreligious aspects of Christmas had been transferred to New Year's by the Soviets, and that date remains the biggest holiday of the year. For non-Orthodox Christians, Christmas is 25 December, and 7 January is St. John's Day. For all Christians, Christmas and Easter (Saturday-Monday) are the most important religious holidays. An all-night ceremony ends with a dawn feast on Easter morning, followed later by visits and other celebrations.

National holidays include International Women's Day (8 Mar.), Independence Day (27 Aug.), and *Limba Noastra* (31 August, to celebrate the proclamation of Romanian as the official language). For *Hram*, each village and city celebrates its birth or the birth of its patron saint. People go from house to house and eat; community activities include wrestling, concerts, and dancing.

Commerce. Offices typically open at 8 or 9 a.m., close for a lunch hour around 1 p.m., and reopen until 5 or 6 p.m. Grocery stores have a slightly longer lunch break and stay open until 8 p.m. Only grocery stores, restaurants, cafés, and farmers' markets are open on Sunday. Prices at most stores are set, as are open-market and street prices. Serious business cannot be conducted between strangers. Personal contacts are necessary, and major transactions are preceded by social interaction.

SOCIETY

Government. The Republic of Moldova has a president as head of state. The president is chosen by members of the Parliament according to a constitutional amendment passed in July 2000. Prior to this amendment, the president was elected by popular vote. The prime minister (currently Vasile Tarlev) serves as head of government. The 104-member Parliament is directly elected; the voting age is 18. Citizenship is granted to ethnic Moldovans and others who meet certain residency and ancestry requirements.

Economy. Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe. It is mostly an agrarian nation, with an economy based on its fertile land. Agriculture employs about 40 percent of the workforce. Around 14 percent is involved in food processing and related industries. Chief products include fruits and vegetables, wine, sugar beets, grains, sunflower seeds, tobacco, and dairy items. Most exports go to neighboring countries. Moldova also exports small appliances, textiles, leather goods, and tools. Fuel and energy are imported, as are some consumer items. The national currency is the *leu* (MLD). Russia, Ukraine, and Romania are Moldova's biggest trading partners.

Moldova is struggling to make the difficult transition to a capitalist economic system. The government has sought to privatize firms, transfer ownership of state farms to peasant joint-stock associations, and reform investment and other market-related laws; however, actual implementation has been slow. The Moldovan economy shrank in 1998 in the wake of Russia's severe financial depression and has continued to struggle since then. Black market activity is an ongoing problem. The lack of progress on budget and privatization legislation has led to a suspension of some IMF and World Bank funding. Life is difficult for many, and it will take time before the benefits of an open market reach the average person, especially in rural areas. Currently, about 80 percent of Moldovans live on less than one dollar a day.

Transportation and Communications. Urban dwellers benefit from an extensive and inexpensive public transport system of buses, trolleys, and minivans. Taxis are uncommon, expensive, and unregulated. Commuter buses and trains travel between cities. In rural villages, people may use horse-drawn carts (*karutsa*). Some Moldovans own cars, but most cannot afford them. Fuel and spare parts are expensive for those who drive. Many people do not have phones, but post offices have public phones. An urban home is more likely to have a telephone than a rural home. Moldovans enjoy reading daily newspapers. The free press is growing and changing rapidly. Television and radio facilities are state owned.

Education. Moldova's basic education system consists of primary, secondary, and high schools. Children begin attending

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	98 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	82 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$2,037
Adult literacy rate	99 percent (male); 98 (female)
Infant mortality rate	43 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	60 (male); 70 (female)

at age six or seven and finish high school 11 years later. An additional year of secondary school is optional at the high school level. Students who do not attend or complete high school may attend a vocational school to learn a trade. Even in high school, students may learn one of several trades by going to a professional education center one day a week. Successful students receive a professional license in the given trade upon graduation from high school. Students often gain hands-on experience in their chosen trade during summer vacations. Moldovans value higher education, and many compete for the limited number of available university spots. An increasing number are studying abroad.

Health. Moldova's health-care system lacks modern facilities, skilled staff, and supplies. Preventive and maternal care are especially lacking. This contributes to high infant mortality and low life expectancy rates.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- In 2001, the Communists swept to power, winning 71 of 101 parliamentary seats. Vladimir Voronin, also a Communist, was elected as president. Voronin would like to see Moldova aligned more closely with Russia. Reviving the economy is currently one of the country's most pressing concerns.
- In 2002, a government plan to make Russian a compulsory language in Moldovan schools resulted in massive antigovernment protests in the capital of Chisinau. Tens of thousands of people participated in the demonstrations. The government ended up retracting its proposal because of the protests. However, some Moldovans fear that the government is pushing the country away from Europe and more in the direction of Russia.
- President Voronin announced in 2002 that Moldova would refuse all financial aid from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Voronin views the aid as economic imperialism. These organizations have suspended assistance anyway because of Moldova's failure to adequately privatize its industries. Moldova has around one billion dollars of foreign debt.

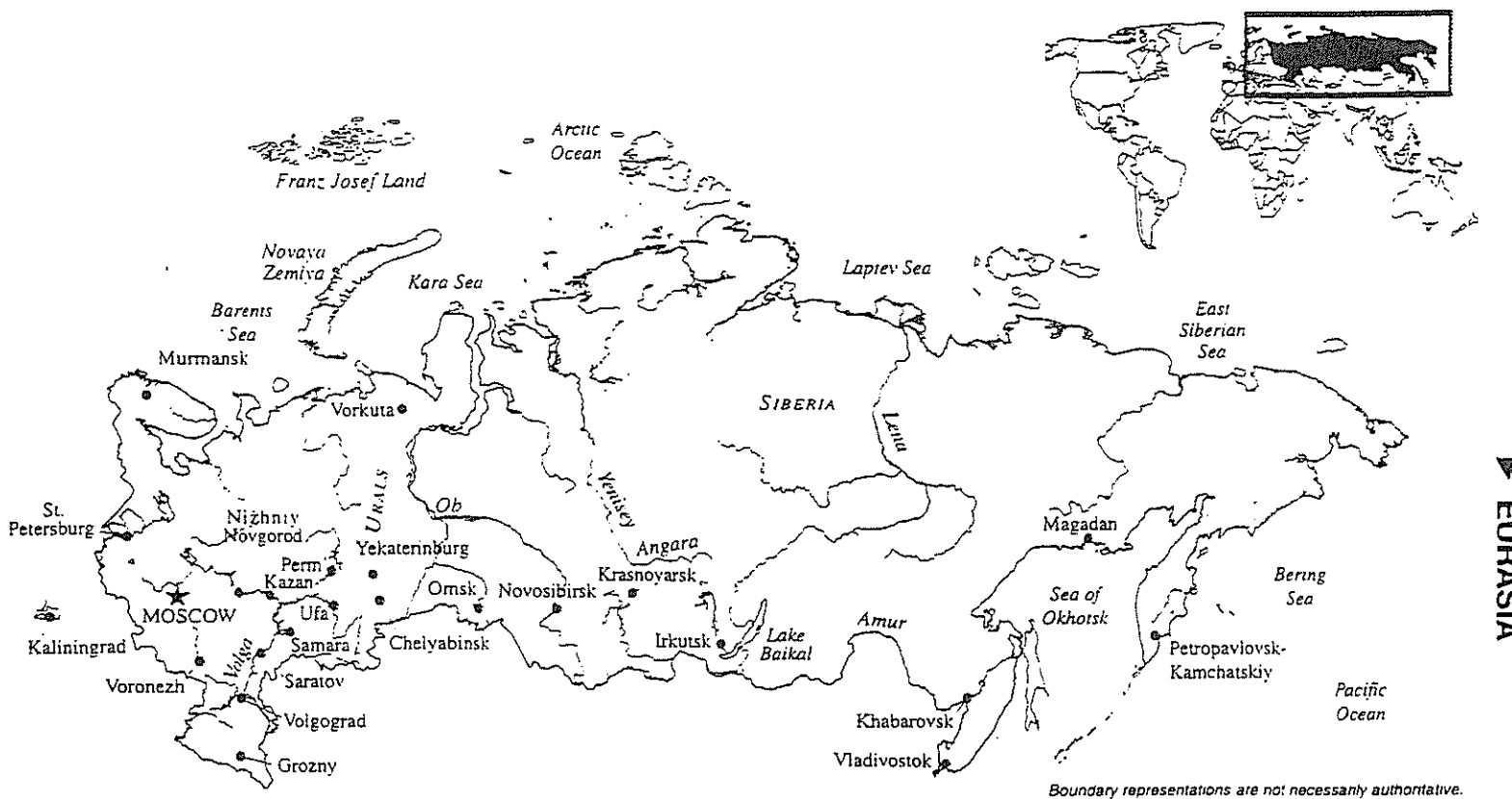
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BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Russia is the largest country in the world. At 6,592,734 square miles (17,075,200 square kilometers), it is nearly twice the size of the United States. Four of the world's largest rivers (Lena, Ob, Volga, and Yenisey) and the world's deepest freshwater lake (Baikal) are in Russia. Much of Russia is covered by great plains, but a large frozen tundra dominates the extreme north. Forests cover much of western Russia. The low Ural Mountains divide Russia's European side from its Asian regions. Siberia is mostly taiga (conifer forests), with tundra (treeless plains characteristic of arctic or subarctic regions) to the north, and steppe (dry, treeless grasslands) to the south. Russia's climate varies considerably by region. Russian winters last from November to March except in Siberia, where winter can last nine months.

History. Slavic peoples settled in eastern Europe during the early Christian era. Many converted to Christianity in the ninth and tenth centuries. In 988, Prince Vladimir declared Christianity the state's official religion. Early in the 13th century, Mongols conquered the Slavs and ruled for 240 years. The Slavs finally defeated the Mongols in 1480 to regain their sovereignty. In 1547, Ivan the Terrible (1533–84) was the first Russian ruler crowned czar of Russia. He expanded Russia's territory, as did Peter the Great (1682–1724) and Catherine the Great (1762–96). The empire reached from Warsaw in the west to Vladivostok in the east. In 1814, Russian troops that had defeated France's Napoleon marched on Paris, and Russia took its place as one of the most powerful states on earth.

When Czar Nicholas II abdicated because of popular unrest during World War I, Vladimir Lenin, head of the Bolshevik Party, led the 1917 revolt that brought down the provisional government and put the Communists in power. Lenin dis-

banded the legislature and banned all other political parties. A civil war between Lenin's Red Army and the White Army lasted until 1922, with Lenin victorious.

In 1922, the Bolsheviks formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and forcibly incorporated Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus into the union. By the time Lenin died in 1924, many people had perished as a result of his radical social restructuring. Lenin was followed by Joseph Stalin, a dictator who forced industrialization and collective agriculture on the people. Millions died in labor camps and from starvation. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, and World War II (the Great Patriotic War) eventually took more than 25 million Soviet lives.

After Stalin died in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev declared he would build real communism within 20 years. Hard-liners opposed to his reforms and policy of détente with the West replaced Khrushchev in 1964 with Leonid Brezhnev. Before his death in 1982, Brezhnev orchestrated the expansion of Soviet influence in the developing world, ordered the invasion of Afghanistan, and built up the Soviet nuclear arsenal. When the next two leaders died in quick succession, young Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in 1986.

Gorbachev soon introduced reforms like *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness). The failure of many reforms exposed inherent weaknesses in the Soviet system. The union quickly unraveled in 1991 after several republics declared independence. Russia's leader at the time was Boris Yeltsin.

In 1993, after Yeltsin dissolved a combative parliament, his opponents voted to impeach him and seized the "White House" (parliament building) in an attempted coup. Following

fire. That victory and the approval of Yeltsin's new constitution were two highlights of an otherwise difficult term in office. Despite poor health and challenges from the Communists and ultranationalists, Yeltsin prevailed in the balloting to become Russia's first-ever freely elected president.

A violent and unpopular war with separatists in Chechnya tarnished Yeltsin's image in 1994. Tens of thousands died before a 1996 cease-fire allowed Chechens to elect local leaders. Although Russian troops withdrew and Chechnya's bid for independence was scheduled for negotiation, troops returned in 1999 after Chechen terrorists allegedly struck Moscow. With public support, military leaders vowed to take control of the republic. While Russian troops captured the Chechen capital of Grozny in early 2000, they have been unable to subdue the rebel resistance. Fighting rages on as both military and civilian casualties mount. The war is a significant drain on Russia's national budget and its resources.

Yeltsin seemed unable to fight rising crime, poverty, corruption, and inflation in the late 1990s. Instead, he fired successive prime ministers and cabinets, only to finally announce his own resignation on New Year's Eve in 1999. Former prime minister Vladimir Putin was appointed acting president ahead of March 2000 elections, which he later won decisively. Putin remains popular, largely due to Russia's economic growth. He has continued the war in Chechnya and promises to further economic reform, decrease corruption, and increase security.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Russia's population of 145.5 million is shrinking annually by 0.35 percent. Of 120 ethnic groups, most are small. Ethnic Russians form 82 percent of the entire population. Other groups include Tartars (4 percent), Ukrainians (3), Chuvashes (1), Belorussians (almost 1), Udmurts, Kazaks, Buryats, Tuvinians, Yakutians, Bashkirs, and others. The capital and largest city is Moscow, with a population of more than 13 million. Other large cities include Saint Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Nizhniy Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Saratov, and Samara. More than three-fourths of Russians live in urban areas. Serious gaps between rich and poor, skilled and unskilled, and healthy and ill are widening and threatening Russia's future development.

Language. Russian is the official language. Its Cyrillic alphabet has 33 letters, most of them unlike any letter in the Roman (Latin) alphabet. Non-Russians also usually speak Russian, especially in urban areas. Rural minorities more often speak their own languages at home or within their ethnic groups. For example, Tartars speak Tartar, Chuvashes speak Chuvash, and Udmurts speak Udmurt. After Communist rule, these individual languages began to be taught at schools where the ethnic group was prominent. Ethnic Russians are not required to learn other local languages, but students are increasingly studying foreign languages (English, French, German, and Spanish).

Religion. The Russian Orthodox Church is the dominant religion, claiming members totaling half of Russia's population. After the October Revolution (1917), the Communists discouraged all religious worship. Mikhail Gorbachev was the first Soviet leader to officially tolerate—even support—religion. Yeltsin also embraced the church, which rapidly regained its influence. Churches other than the Russian Orthodox are allowed to operate if they have registered with authorities and can prove they have a long-standing presence in Russia. Jewish and Islamic groups do not face these restrictions.

and Buryats are Buddhist.

General Attitudes. In Russia's long history of totalitarianism, its inhabitants had few opportunities to make their own decisions, whether ruled by a czar or the Communist Party. Initiative, personal responsibility, and the desire to work independently were suppressed by the state, and one was expected to conform to official opinion and behavior. Problems were not so much solved as endured or ignored.

After 1991, many Russians were searching for new social values and were optimistic about a future of freedom and opportunity. In reality, Russia's social fabric and economic stability have so deteriorated that Communists and nationalists have regained popularity with people who are tired of Russia's chaos, declining living standards, increasingly violent and rampant crime, and unemployment. Those who are taking advantage of economic opportunities are far fewer than those who must wonder each month whether they will be paid. Prosperity promised within a few years now seems a generation or more away. Still, social status is often measured by the acquisition of power and wealth. Respect for authority continues. Though frustrated, many Russians seem resigned to their situation and are willing to endure it the best they can. For example, they continue to work when not paid. And, to compensate for the lack of wages, many families feed themselves by gardening. More than half of all fresh produce in Russia comes from private gardens and is consumed by the family. Even urban dwellers have garden plots to sustain themselves.

Friendship is extremely important to Russians, who are warm and open with trusted friends. They rely on their network of friends in hard times and will go to great lengths to help friends whenever possible.

Although intensely proud of Mother Russia and its achievements, Russians are basically pessimistic and usually do not express much hope for a better life in the future. Even generally optimistic Russians might not show their true feelings in public but rather express frustration with everyday life. Still, Russians see their historical heritage and social structure as unique. They desire to be known not for the negative aspects of the Soviet period and its aftermath but for Russian contributions to world literature, art, science, technology, and medicine.

Personal Appearance. Russians, especially women, like to be well dressed in public. Urban people prefer European fashions. More young people are wearing shorts in warm weather; young women like short skirts. Young men wear jogging suits in mild weather. Jeans are popular among most age groups, except older women. The fur hat that many Russians wear in winter is called a *shapka* or *ushanka*.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. When meeting, most Russians shake hands firmly and say *Zdravstvuyte* (Hello), *Dobryi dien* (Good day), *Dobroye utro* (Good morning), *Dobryi vecher* (Good evening), or *Privet* (a casual "Hello"). Good friends say "Hello" with the more informal *Zdravstvuy* or *Zdorovo*. Friends, but not strangers, might also ask *Kak dela?* (How are you?) and wait for a response. Russians are introduced by their full name (given, patronymic, and then surname). Surnames are not used without titles, such as *Gospodin* (Mr.) and *Gospozhica* (Mrs.). The military, police, and some citizens continue to use the Soviet-era title *tovarishch* ("friend" or "comrade"). At work or in polite company, Russians address each other by given name

a respected elder. Close friends use given names alone.

Gestures. Pointing with the index finger is improper but commonly done. It is impolite to talk (especially to an older person) with one's hands in the pockets or arms folded across the chest. To count, Russians bend (close) their fingers rather than fan them. It is bad luck to shake hands across a threshold.

visiting. Russians like to visit and have guests. Sitting and talking for hours is a favorite pastime. One usually removes shoes when entering a home. Hosts generally offer refreshments, but guests may decline them. Friends and family may visit anytime without notice but usually arrange visits in advance if they have telephones. They make themselves at home and generally can expect to be welcomed for any length of time. Visits with new acquaintances are more formal.

Giving gifts is a strong tradition, and almost every event (birthdays, weddings, holidays, etc.) is accompanied by presents. For casual visits, it is common (but not required) for guests to bring a simple gift (flowers, food, or alcohol) to their hosts. The object given is less important than the friendship expressed by the act. Flowers are given in odd numbers; even numbers are for funerals. If friends open a bottle of *vodka* (literally, "little water"), they customarily drink until it is empty.

Eating. Russians eat with the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right, although many people use only a fork. People keep their hands above the table and not in their lap. Soup is common for lunch or dinner. At lunch or the main meal, people also like *zakuski* (appetizers). When entertaining, Russians put more food than they can eat on the table and may leave some on the plate to indicate there is abundance (whether true or not) in the house. Guests can indicate they have eaten well by leaving a very small amount of food on the plate. Russians generally do not go out to eat in cafés or restaurants because the few that exist are fairly expensive.

LIFESTYLE

Family. The family is the basic social unit in Russia; most people expect to marry and have children. The average urban couple has one child, but rural families are larger. Parents support their children financially until they reach adulthood. Grown children are often expected to help their parents financially because pensions are frequently inadequate. The father is considered head of the family, although many households are led by single mothers. Both husband and wife usually work, but men rarely share in household duties. Women bear the greatest burden in Russia, rarely receiving equal pay, promotions, or leisure time. Women earn only one-fifth of the nation's income.

Child care is available, but few families can afford it. When the elderly live with their children, they often provide child care and do the shopping. Because housing is difficult to obtain, young couples often live with their parents for some time. Urban apartments are small and it is common for a family of three or more to live in a one- or two-room apartment with a kitchen and a bathroom. Rural homes are slightly larger than apartments but often lack running water and central heat.

Dating and Marriage. When young people date, they usually go to a movie or for a walk in a city park. Sometimes they go to bars or cafés, but this is too expensive for many people. Instead, the youth like to have parties in their apartments when their parents are not home. Before 1991, couples could only marry in a "wedding palace." Many people are now also hav-

(literally, "coronation"). The divorce rate is high, as many people do not view marriage as a lasting commitment.

Diet. Although food is plentiful, it is expensive. The average person eats more homegrown produce than imported fruits and vegetables. People on fixed and limited incomes (mainly the elderly) eat more bread and potatoes than anything else. Urban residents more often have meat and dairy products. Traditional Russian foods include *borsch* (vegetable soup), *pirozhki* (a stuffed roll, eaten as "fast food"), *golubtsy* (stuffed cabbage leaves baked with tomato sauce and eaten with sour cream), *pelmeni* (a pasta dish), and *shi* (soup with sour cabbage). *Borsch* is still one of the most popular foods in the country. Its ingredients (beets, potatoes, cabbages, carrots, and onions) almost complete the list of vegetables used in everyday life. Pork, sausage, chicken, and cheeses are popular, but they can be expensive. Russians drink coffee, tea, and mineral water; juice and soda are available. Men prefer vodka to wine.

Recreation. Russians have little leisure time because of the hours they devote to getting food, working extra jobs, or taking care of their households. Urban Russians often spend their spare time at their *dachas* (country cottages), if they have them, relaxing and growing fruits and vegetables. In the summer, people like to gather mushrooms. Cities have relatively few nightclubs, but that is changing gradually.

The country's favorite sport is soccer. Winter sports such as ice-skating, hockey, and cross-country skiing are also particularly popular. Most families like to watch television in the evening. The people highly appreciate theaters and movies, but these are available only in big cities. Rural people can watch movies at community recreation centers called *dvorets kultury* (palace of culture) or the smaller *dom kultury* (house of culture).

The Arts. Russia has a grand and abiding heritage in the cultural arts. Realistic, romantic, political, and psychological themes are common in Russia's world-famous poetry, short stories, novels, and plays.

Russian composers wrote some of the world's most beloved symphonies, ballets, operas, and other musical works. Ballet is an important art form: *Swan Lake* and *Don Quixote* were first performed in Russia. The Bolshoi Ballet, a renowned company, started in 1776. Traditional music and dance are also important to the people. Theater, ballet, symphonic, and folk productions are well attended. Russian folk crafts include nested dolls (*matryoshka*), wood carving, lacquer painting, and lace making.

Holidays. New Year's Day is the most popular holiday in Russia. Almost everyone decorates fir trees and has parties to celebrate the New Year. Grandfather Frost leaves presents for children to find on New Year's Day. Easter and Christmas observances, long interrupted by communism, regained some prominence in 1990. Christmas is on 7 January, according to the Julian calendar used by the Russian Orthodox Church. Women's Day is on 8 March. Solidarity Day (1 May, also known as May Day) is a day for parades. Victory Day (9 May) commemorates the end of World War II and is deeply important to most Russians. Every profession (teachers, miners, police, etc.) has its own special day each year to celebrate.

Commerce. The business week is 40 hours, with Saturdays and Sundays off. Offices generally are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. They close for lunch. Prices in state stores are not negotiable, but on the streets, where an increasing number of items

are sold, prices are often higher. Membership forms (wholesale markets), where people can buy everything from food to electronics, are becoming more common. Capitalism boomed for the few people with connections, but newly rich Russian businessmen are generally despised by others and are considered dishonest. Most private businesses are forced to "protection" money to organized crime groups.

Russians prefer having social interaction before discussing business. Trying to do business on the phone without seeing the prospective business partner is ineffective. One often spends a lot of time in meetings before even a small deal can succeed.

SOCIETY

Government. Russia is a federation of 21 autonomous republics and 49 *oblasts*, or regions. The constitution provides for a president (Vladimir Putin) as head of state and a prime minister (Mikhail Kasyanov) as head of government. The president is strong and has power to dissolve parliament, set foreign policy, and appoint the prime minister. The Federal Assembly has two houses, a 176-seat Federation Council and the 450-seat State *Duma*. An array of political parties is represented in the *Duma*. The actual party names are less important than their alliances. Communists form the largest block, but nationalists and liberals form other substantial voting blocks. The voting age is 18.

Economy. Russia's natural resources give it great potential for economic growth and development. Natural gas, coal, gold, oil, diamonds, copper, silver, and lead are all abundant. Heavy industry dominates the economy, although the agricultural sector is potentially strong. Russia's economy remains weak and unstable for many reasons, including an inefficient distribution system, political uncertainties, declining foreign investment, a crumbling infrastructure, high foreign debt, high interest rates, poor tax laws and collection rates, high inflation, low quality production, organized crime, and corruption. Poverty is increasing rapidly; around 40 percent of Russians live below the official poverty line. The government's strict measures have begun to reverse the downward economic trend. Most transactions are made in cash, which is in increasingly short supply; many communities subsist by bartering goods or services. The currency is the *ruble* (R).

Transportation and Communications. Although the number of privately owned cars has grown since the 1980s, most people use public transportation. Major cities have subways, trolleys, trains, and buses. Taxis are expensive and hard to find, but unofficial taxis are increasingly common. Domestic air travel is not always reliable. Railroads are extensive, but service is poor. The telephone system is outdated but has undergone significant changes in recent years. Cell phones are increasingly popular, especially in major cities. The press faces challenges to its independence.

Education. Education is free and compulsory between ages six and seventeen. In 1994, new curriculum guidelines were introduced to encourage choice and innovation over previous approaches to teaching, but many public schools are unable or unwilling to implement the reforms due to lack of money, supplies, and clear local leadership. However, a few are embrac-

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	55 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	52 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$7,473
Adult literacy rate	99 percent (male); 99 (female)
Infant mortality rate	20 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	60 (male); 73 (female)

ing new ideas and even teaching basic market economics. Students attend primary, middle, and high school. They can specialize in their last two years. Private schools offer a high-quality education to the wealthy and influential. Education is highly valued; however, economic hardship has seen many preschool closures, declining kindergarten attendance, and teacher strikes. More than five hundred universities, medical schools, and technical academies are found throughout the country.

Health. Medical care is free but of poor quality. Some doctors are well trained, but they lack modern equipment and medicine to adequately treat their patients. Private clinics provide better (but expensive) care. Common major diseases are cancer (especially lung cancer, reflecting a high percentage of smokers), diabetes, and heart ailments. Alcoholism and drug abuse may affect as much as 42 percent of the population, including a large number of teenagers. This abuse is a contributing factor in many murders, car accidents, and suicides. Diphtheria, dysentery, tuberculosis, polio, AIDS, and other serious maladies are spreading. The decline in health is reaching crisis proportions. Life expectancy for men is far lower than it is in any other Western country.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- In May 2002, Russia and the United States signed a nuclear arms treaty, which will reduce their weapons arsenals by two-thirds over the next decade. The agreement was signed by President Vladimir Putin and President George W. Bush.
- Also in May 2002, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) accepted Russia as a junior partner and created a NATO-Russia Council. Russia will now have more influence on NATO decisions regarding such issues as international security and counterterrorism. But Russia will not have veto power. The decision followed months of negotiations between Russian and NATO foreign ministers.

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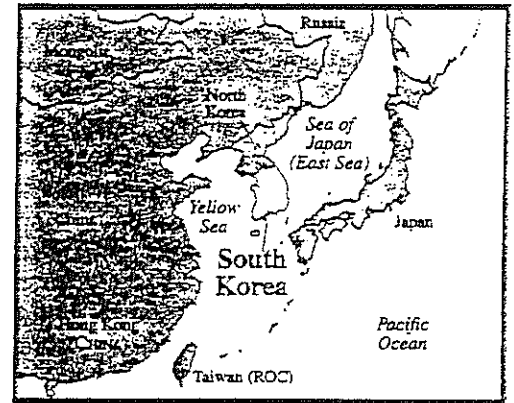
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Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Covering 38,023 square miles (98,480 square kilometers), South Korea is slightly larger than Indiana. Its only border is shared with North Korea at the 38th parallel. At its closest point, it is 123 miles (196 kilometers) from Japan. Around 65 percent of the land is forested and approximately 20 percent is suitable for cultivation. Hills and mountains dominate the east, while plains are found in the west and south. Korea's climate is temperate, but high humidity makes summers seem hotter and winters colder. Korea experiences all four seasons: spring and fall are the most pleasant times of the year. The monsoon season is from mid-July to mid-August. During this time, Korea receives half of its annual rainfall. Korea is traditionally known as Chosön ("Land of the Morning Calm").

History. Powerful kingdoms flourished on the Korean peninsula more than two thousand years ago. Of particular importance were the Koguryō (established in 37 B.C.), Paekche (18 B.C.), and Silla (57 B.C.) dynasties. Silla kings united the three warring kingdoms in A.D. 668 and developed a rich Buddhist culture. By 935, the strong, new Koryō kingdom had established itself on the peninsula. The name *Korea* comes from *Koryō*. During the Koryō era, the world's first movable metal-type printer was invented. Koryō general Yi Sōng-gye seized power, declared himself king, and established the Chosön (or Yi) Dynasty in 1392. The Yi ruled for more than five hundred years. In the latter part of the Yi Dynasty, China and Japan sought control of Korea, a struggle the Japanese eventually won. They annexed Korea in 1910.

At the end of World War II (1945), the Soviet Union entered Korea from the north and the United States entered the south to accept the surrender of Japanese troops. The peninsula was

accordingly divided (at the 38th parallel) into two administrative zones. After attempts to hold nationwide elections failed, an independent government was established in the south with U.S. support; Syngman Rhee became president.

In June 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea, triggering a three-year war. The United States and United Nations sent troops to help South Korea. Concerned that war might spill into Chinese territory, China sent troops to aid North Korea. The war ravaged the peninsula and ended in a stalemate (a peace treaty still has not been signed), with the original border virtually unchanged. Violent border incidents have occurred over the years, and North Korean soldiers have entered South Korean territory several times.

Rhee resigned in 1960 after student unrest over charges of corruption. Indeed, students have played a vital role in South Korea's democratic evolution. Their demonstrations precipitated a military coup in 1961, and General Park Chung Hee seized power. Elected in 1963, Park implemented some reforms but retained firm control. He was assassinated in 1979. Student demonstrations in Kwangju in 1980 brought down the interim government. Troops sent to halt the demonstrations killed some two hundred students. General Chun Doo Hwan was appointed president. Kwangju became a center for anti-government sentiment, and the slain students are memorialized every year. The economy steadily improved during the 1980s, but political dissent was still tightly controlled. After more mass demonstrations for greater political liberty, Chun stepped down in 1987. General Roh Tae Woo was freely elected that year, and he began instituting reforms that paved the way for civilian rule.

In 1992, Kim Young-sam was elected the first civilian to

occupy the Blue House (presidential mansion) in more than 30 years. Kim promised to further reform government and to continue economic progress, but he was plagued by scandals, the bankruptcy of Hanbo Steel Industry Company (Korea's second largest conglomerate), and the Asian economic crisis of 1997.

Elections in 1997 brought former dissident Kim Dae Jung to power as president in 1998. His main priorities included economic recovery and improved relations with North Korea. He implemented a "sunshine policy" toward the North in hopes of eventually achieving reunification. While that goal has long been espoused on both sides of the border, different visions and deep suspicions keep the two Koreas far apart.

THE PEOPLE

Population. The Republic of Korea's population of 47.9 million is growing annually by 0.9 percent. About three-fourths of the population lives in urban areas; almost half of South Koreans live in the greater Seoul area alone. Seoul has more than 10 million residents. Pusan, Taegu, and Inch'on are the next largest cities. Except for a small Chinese minority, Korea is a homogeneous country. However, regionalism divides Koreans and creates biases and tensions that have impacted politics and social interaction throughout the nation's history. A person's dialect or accent can identify his or her home region. Intermarriage between regions is relatively uncommon. Political rivalries between leaders from Kyongsang province and Cholla province are most pronounced. Voters prefer to elect someone from their own region, regardless of the candidate's qualifications.

Language. The Korean language plays an important role in national identity. It is written in Hangul, a phonetic alphabet created in 1446 because classical Chinese (the only written language available) was difficult to master. Hangul made it possible for the commoner to read and write. It has 24 letters, 10 of which are vowels. Hangul also instilled a national pride in Koreans that helped them preserve their culture during periods of foreign occupation. The Seoul dialect is the standard taught in school. Korean used in South Korea mixes numerous Chinese characters with Hangul script in newspapers and government documents, but Korean is not related to Chinese. Modern Korean has adopted many English and other foreign terms associated with Western culture. English is taught in school and many people can speak it.

Religion. Confucianism permeates all aspects of Korean society, but it is a philosophy and not a religion. It orders social behavior, stressing virtue, morality, and filial piety. Children are expected to show deference to their parents and perform certain duties for them in life and after they die. Confucian rites conducted on behalf of ancestors promote this respect and family unity. Even Christians will perform these cultural rites in honor of their dead. Nearly 50 percent of the population is Christian. Most belong to a variety of Protestant churches.

Roughly one percent of the population engages in Shamanism, including geomancy, divination, avoiding bad luck or omens, warding off evil spirits, and venerating the dead. More than 40 percent of Koreans are Buddhist, but few regularly attend worship services.

General Attitudes. Korean society is vertically ordered according to tenets of Confucian philosophy. Nearly all interaction is determined by one's place in various social groups or one's status in a relationship. One's status is determined by age, gender, education, family background, wealth, occupa-

tion, and/or political ideology. Success depends on social contacts. Koreans often use extreme modesty when speaking about themselves. They are reluctant to accept high honors and graciously deny compliments. Koreans are quick to make friends and they rely on each other for just about anything.

Giving gifts as a means of obtaining favors is common, especially in the workplace, and accepting a gift carries the responsibility of reciprocity. Open criticism and public disagreement are considered inappropriate because they can damage another person's reputation. Out of respect for the feelings of others, Koreans may withhold bad news or adverse opinions or express them in an indirect way. Greater democracy, economic prosperity, and Westernization are changing Korean society for the rising generation. Young people enjoy more material possessions and a broader pop culture than their parents' generation.

Personal Appearance. Most Koreans, except for the elderly in rural areas, wear Western-style clothing. The youth wear modern fashions, and Korea has an active fashion industry. Clothing often depends on the event. In public, conservative dress is important. Bare feet are inappropriate. In the business world, Western-style suits and dresses are the norm. On special occasions or holidays, however, Koreans often wear a *hanbok*. For women, this is a long two-piece dress that is often very colorful. For men, a *hanbok* includes trousers and a loose-fitting jacket or robe.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. Within the Confucian social structure, how one is greeted depends on one's age and social standing relative to the greeter. A bow is the traditional greeting, but it is usually accompanied by a handshake between men. (As a sign of respect, the left hand may support or rest under the right forearm during the handshake. Women shake hands less often than men do. Professionals meeting for the first time exchange business cards, presenting and accepting the cards with both hands after a handshake. A common greeting between peers or for subordinates is *Annyong haseyo?* (Are you at peace?). Children often greet each other with a simple *Annyong?* To show respect for a social superior, one adds an honorific: *Annyong hashimnikka?* Young children bow or nod when greeting adults, and most adults bow or nod when meeting people other than friends and relatives.

Gestures. Proper courtesy is shown with gestures. Items are passed with both hands or the right hand grasped by the left at the wrist or forearm. Feet are not placed on a desk or chair. When yawning or using a toothpick, one covers the mouth. Koreans beckon by waving the fingers together with the palm down. Beckoning with the index finger is rude. Facial expressions are often more important than body language in communicating unspoken messages. When embarrassed, a person may respond by laughing. Eye contact is important in conversation among peers. Traditionally, Korean men hold hands or walk with a hand on a friend's shoulder. While this is less common among the younger generation, it is still an important way for men to express informality or friendship. Touching older people or members of the opposite sex is usually not appropriate.

Visiting. Guests invited to a home remove their shoes upon entering. While Western furniture is common, in traditional Korean homes guests are seated on floor cushions that are heated from below (*onao*, floors). Men sit cross-legged and women tuck their legs to one side behind them. The guest

... instead of traditional Korean wedding attire. men and women usually separate to socialize. For example, the women gather in the kitchen. Refreshments usually are served, and refusing them is impolite. Guests invited for a meal customarily bring a small gift, often something that can be served at the gathering. Wrapped gifts are not opened in front of the giver. A host accompanies a guest to the door or outside at the end of a visit. Older men socialize in *Tabang* (teahouses).

Diet. Korean food is generally spicy. Rice and *kimch'i* (a spicy pickled cabbage) are staples at almost every meal. Various soups are common. Rice often is combined with other ingredients, such as red beans or vegetables. *Pibimbap* is rice mixed with bits of meat and seasoned vegetables. Chicken and beef are common meats. A favorite delicacy is *pulkogi*, strips of marinated and barbecued beef. Koreans also eat large amounts of fish, seafood (clams, oysters, squid, octopus, sea cucumbers), and *adok* (pounded rice cake). Barley tea is served with most meals. *Soju* is a common alcoholic drink served with meals. *Magolli* is a similar drink popular more in rural areas. Fruit is often served as dessert.

Eating. Koreans eat three meals a day, though busy schedules make it difficult for the family to always dine together. Chopsticks and spoons are the most commonly used utensils. At a dinner party, the meal usually is served before socializing begins. Koreans pass items and pour drinks with the right hand, supporting the forearm or wrist with the left hand. In restaurants, tipping is not expected, but the bill usually includes a service charge. Eating while walking on the street is not appropriate for adults.

Recreation. The most popular spectator sports are baseball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball. Some Koreans swim, play tennis, bowl, or golf. Children enjoy training in *taekwondo*, and most men have some experience with it from their military service. Badminton, table tennis, and billiards are popular games. Unique to Korea is a form of wrestling called *ssŏm*, where contestants are tied together during their match. Mountain climbing and hiking are favorite activities for weekends and vacations. Music, television, and video games attract the attention of the youth.

LIFESTYLE

Family. The family is the foundation of society and is bound by a strong sense of obligation among its members. The father is the head of the family; he and the oldest son receive the greatest respect. The oldest son is given the best opportunities for education and success. Although women comprise slightly more than half of the labor force, their social status is lower than men's in the workplace and at home. Gender roles are well-defined, but urban women do enjoy greater equality with men than do rural women. Mothers supervise the household and children, while men are the primary providers and final decision-makers. Women retain their maiden names when they marry. A Korean name consists of a one-syllable family name followed by a one- or two-syllable given name. Kim, Lee (이), and Park (박) are the most common family names. On a person's 60th birthday (a milestone rarely reached in the past), extended family members gather for a grand celebration (*hwan'gap*). Families may save money for years just to pay for the event.

The Arts. Prose, poetry, legends, folktales, and plays were either passed down orally or recorded in the Chinese language until Hangul was developed in the mid-15th century. Poetry was originally performed through song; *sijo* (an ancient poetic form) has endured in popularity. Themes included Confucian principles, love, and nature, while current renditions also include political topics. Folk music and dance continue to be popular. *P'ansori* is sung by a soloist accompanied by drums. Mask dances, drum dances, masked theater (*sandae*), and puppet theater (*kkoktukaksi*) are performed at festivals or for entertainment. Movies, art exhibits, and theaters also provide entertainment.

Calligraphy is an important art and has influenced traditional painting. Every brush stroke represents an object in nature. Art forms are distinctly Korean but have been influenced by China as well as Buddhism and Shamanism. The government actively supports and preserves the arts.

Similar lavish attention is afforded to babies. After one hundred days of life, a small feast is held in honor of the child's survival to that point (also a date often not reached in the past). A much larger celebration (*tol*) is held at the first birthday. From the many gifts offered, what a child picks up first is thought to signal his or her fortunes in life. Although the nuclear family is now more common, especially in the cities, sons still expect to care for their aging parents. Because of the Confucian emphasis on family hierarchies, Koreans keep detailed genealogies. These records date back many centuries and include a person's birth, relations, achievements, and place of burial. In clan gatherings, families that rank higher in the genealogy are treated with greater respect by lower families.

Holidays. For the New Year (1-3 Jan.), families gather to exchange gifts, honor the dead, and enjoy large meals. Generally, everyone dresses in traditional clothing. After the memorial services, family members bow to each older person in a show of respect. Games are played and fortunes are told. Koreans celebrate the Lunar New Year in the spring by visiting hometowns or vacationing in resorts. The other important family holiday is *Ch'usok* (Harvest Moon Festival, held in the fall), when family members visit ancestral tombs to clean the grave site and leave food offerings in honor of the dead. Larger family reunions are common at this time. Other holidays include Independence Movement Day (1 Mar.), Children's Day (5 May), Buddha's Birthday (in May, observed according to the lunar calendar), Memorial Day (6 June), Constitution Day (17 July), Independence Day (15 Aug.), National Foundation Day (3 Oct.), and Christmas. Arbor Day (5 Apr.), Armed Forces Day (1 Oct.), and Korean Language Day (9 Oct.) are marked by various celebrations but are not public holidays.

Dating and Marriage. Young people enjoy going to movies, hiking, taking short trips, meeting at coffee shops, or joining friends at fast-food restaurants. They may meet in karaoke rooms, arcades, or "video rooms" (establishments that show movies on videotape). Couples might hold hands on a date, but kissing in public is not appropriate. While trends are changing, most Korean youth rarely have time for serious dating before they enter college or the workforce. In some cases, rural families still arrange marriages for couples who have met but not dated in the Western sense. Traditional wedding ceremonies were rather elaborate, but today they often take place in public wedding halls where couples wear Western-style clothing

Commerce. Small family-owned stores are usually open every day from early in the morning until 10 or 11 p.m. In many cases, the family lives above or near the store. Larger department stores close by 8 p.m. Other businesses are generally

open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Banks and government offices close earlier.

SOCIETY

Government. The Republic of South Korea has nine provinces (*do*) and six special cities (*jikhalsi*). The president, Kim Dae-jung, may only serve one five-year term. He appoints a prime minister (currently Lee Han-dong) who is technically, but not in practice, head of government. The State Council (cabinet) is comprised of the president, the prime minister, and 15 to 30 ministry heads. Members of the National Assembly (*Kuk Hoe*) serve four-year terms. The majority of members are directly elected. A small number of seats are apportioned according to how well parties perform in elections. All citizens may vote at age 20.

Economy. South Korea experienced rapid economic growth after the 1960s to earn a position as one of the Four Dragons of East Asia. In just one generation, South Korea rose from poverty to relative prosperity and the real gross domestic product per capita rose from \$690 to \$11,594. Most families came to identify themselves as part of the middle class. In the late 1990s, strikes, a large budget deficit, political scandals, bankruptcies, and competition from other nations made Korea vulnerable to the economic crisis that swept Asia. The *chaebol* (huge conglomerates that dominate the economy) had not followed sound fiscal policies and began to fail. With the economy near collapse, the standard of living fell dramatically. The government has embarked on a restructuring campaign that, among other things, is to make the *chaebol* more responsible. Short-term consequences include massive layoffs, which have resulted in an increase in protests and social unrest. Heavy dependence on international trade has made the economy more vulnerable to global and regional economic downturns. Despite the challenges, the country's economy has continued to grow, often at a high rate.

Chief agricultural products include rice, barley, vegetables, and fish. About 6 percent of the labor force is in agriculture and lives in rural villages, cultivating small plots or collective farms. Around 40 percent of the labor force works in mining and manufacturing. More than half is involved in service occupations. Korea's industries include textiles and clothing, chemicals, steel, electronics, and automobiles. The currency is the *won* (W).

Transportation and Communications. Air, rail, and bus connections provide a good transportation network between cities. Roads are paved and in good condition. Buses, private cars, and taxis handle urban transportation. Seoul has an efficient subway and a quality express bus system, in addition to regular buses. Taxis are plentiful and inexpensive. Drivers often will stop for other passengers during busy hours. Driving habits are aggressive and accidents are common. There are numerous radio and television stations. Many daily newspapers are available. The postal and telephone systems are efficient and modern.

Education. Education is the most valued aspect of Korean culture, a virtue rooted in Confucianism. It is a key to success, respect, and power. Schooling is compulsory between the ages six and twelve, and nearly every child completes primary

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	27 of 162 countries
Adjusted for women	29 of 146 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$16,100
Adult literacy rate	99 percent (male); 96 (female)
Infant mortality rate	8 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	71 (male); 79 (female)

schooling. Most continue to secondary schools, which demand long hours and high performance. To enter a university, applicants must pass extremely competitive and rigorous entrance exams. Students prepare intensively for months to pass exams, often hiring tutors or taking private classes. Political demonstrations usually occur every spring and are considered part of the students' duty to protect the people against social injustices. Though sometimes violent, these activities have been part of university life for much longer than Korea has been a republic. However, they have decreased in frequency since 1992.

Health. All segments of the population have access to good health care. The best medical facilities are in Seoul. Care progressed with economic growth: most people now have safe water and adequate nutrition. Nearly all women receive prenatal care and medical attention during delivery. More than 90 percent of all children are immunized.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- President Kim renewed a coalition with the United Liberal Democrats (ULD) after elections in 2000 and named its leader, Lee Han-dong, as prime minister. However, the ULD has pulled out of the coalition in advance of the December 2002 presidential elections.
- After the North allowed tourists to visit the Kumang Mountains in 1999, Kim Dae-jung held a three-day summit with North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Il, in 2000. The historic meeting in Pyongyang resulted in a declaration to resolve the issue of reunification. The two nations ended their propaganda war, began planning to send joint sports teams to international events, and scheduled the reunion of families separated since 1953. These meetings and other planned cooperation brought hope to both nations. However, North Korea has frequently pulled out of talks, citing political tension due to U.S. policies.
- South Korea and Japan co-hosted the World Cup games in May 2002. The games have been a chance for the two countries, historically at odds, to work more closely together.

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LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE

Introduction

ESL teachers are continually coping with the problem of acceptable, understandable pronunciation from students. They need to understand why Peter from Poland cannot say "th", or why John from Hungary is saying "v", when they are attempting to teach him to say "w". ESL teachers can avoid much frustration if they are made aware of the basic linguistic interference that students bring from their native languages. This interference includes pronunciation, syntax, and grammar. If teachers are aware of the interference they can, in many cases, find alternatives and improve student pronunciation dramatically.

An example of this occurs with students whose native language is Spanish. They do not think they can pronounce words like "this" or "thirteen"; however, that sound **DOES** occur in the Spanish language. The problem is that it is not used at the beginning of words, but at the end of words. When Spanish-speaking students are made aware that they do have that sound in their language, their pronunciation improves immediately.

Another example is in word placement for dates and addresses. In many languages, the date is given with the number first, the month second, and the year last. Similarly, an address is given with the house number first followed by the name of the street, and the zip code followed by the city. Although this linguistic interference is difficult to change, the awareness of the problem is helpful to the ESL teacher.

The problem becomes most difficult when the English sound does not occur in the students' native language at all; however, frustrations can be eased when the ESL teacher is at least aware of these problems.

The following explanation of some of the basic linguistic interference is an attempt to simplify the complicated job of the ESL teacher.

ARABIC

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Arabic uses a non-Roman script alphabet. Reading and writing are from right to left. Traditionally, a book will be opened from the left.
2. Both nouns and adjectives have articles.
3. Adjectives follow nouns. The brown shoes > the shoes the brown.
4. Although accent varies in Arabic speaking countries, the language will be generally understood by educated Arabs.
5. Verb phrases do not occur in Arabic.
6. Since vowels are not written separately in Arabic, they may be left out when an ESL student attempts to write in English. In many cases, street > strt; dress > drs, etc.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. The **R** is formed in the front of the mouth, and it is trilled or rolled.
2. The aspirated **P** as in put does not exist. The sound will resemble a **B** sound. Paper > baber.
3. The **TH** sound does not exist in Arabic.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** will be replaced with **S**. thin > sin.
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** will be replaced with **Z** or **D**. that > zat or dat.
4. The aspirated **T** will sound more like **D**. too > doo.
5. **CH** does not exist. It is replaced by **SH**. cheep > sheep.
6. There is no hard **G** as in go. The **G** is always soft as in gentle.
7. The short vowel sounds can cause difficulties for the ESL learner.

CHINESE

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. There are various styles of writing and reading in Chinese.
 - a. The old, traditional style is written and read in vertical columns, top to bottom, right to left. The front of the book is on the left.
 - b. The new style is written and read horizontally from left to right.
2. Characters are used in place of a phonetic alphabet.
3. Chinese is a tonal language; different tones give different meanings to words. Rhythm and stress can cause problems for ESL students.
4. Chinese is made up of one-syllable words. This can cause much difficulty in the comprehension of long English words.
5. Articles are optional.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Consonant clusters are rare in Chinese. Since English has many of them, this can create pronunciation problems for the ESL student.
2. The **TH** sound does not exist.
 - a. Voiceless **TH** will be replaced by **T** or **F**.
think > tink or fink
 - b. Voiced **TH** will be replaced by **D** or **V**.
that > dat or vat
3. The **L** and **R** sounds are difficult to produce since students cannot distinguish the difference between the two sounds. Some will always use "R" for both sounds, while others will always use "L."
glass > grass or grass > glass
blew > brew or brew > blew
4. In the initial position a sound resembling **L** will usually replace an **R**.
road > load
5. Chinese has no **Z** sound. It is replaced with **SH** or **S**.
zip > ship or sip

CROATIAN, SERBIAN

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Croatian and Serbian form two of the four main languages from this area in Europe. They include many dialects and variations in pronunciation and grammar.
2. Croatian uses the Roman alphabet, while Serbian uses the Cyrillic alphabet.
3. Nouns, pronouns, and adjectives must agree in gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter).
4. Verb endings are used in place of pronouns.
5. There are no articles.
6. In a sentence, expressions of time and place occur according to their importance within the context of that sentence.
7. Irregular verbs may be difficult. Perfect tenses will be unfamiliar in meaning.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Voiced and voiceless **TH** do not exist. Students will tend to pronounce these sounds as **D** or **T**.
both > bod or bot; these > dese or tese
2. The short English vowel sounds are very difficult. Generally, the student tends not to hear the slight variations in these sounds.
3. The letter **R** is rolled.
4. The letter **W** does not exist. It is replaced by **V** or **F**.
want > vant or fant
5. In many cases **V** > **B**, **C** > **S**, and **X** > **H**.
vat > bat; cold > sold; Texas > Tehas

CZECH

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Nouns as well as adjectives have gender (masculine, feminine, and neuter).
2. The endings on the words signify the gender, the person, and the tense.
3. Articles are not used.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. **W** is replaced with a **V** sound.
want > vant
2. **Y**, when used as a vowel, is a long "E" sound.
symbol > seembol
3. **J** is a **Y** sound.
January > Yanuary
4. The **TH** sound does not exist.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** becomes **T**.
think > tink
 - b. Voiced initial **Th** becomes **D**.
these > dese
 - c. Voiceless final **TH** becomes **F**, **S**, or **T**.
with > wif, wis, or wit
 - d. Voiced middle **TH** becomes **D**.
mother > modder
5. Final **G** is replaced by **K**.
pig > pik
6. Final **D** is replaced by **T**.
bad > bat

FARSI (PERSIAN)

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. The alphabet is made up of script which resembles Arabic.
2. Reading and writing are from right to left.
3. Nouns are followed by adjectives.
4. Nouns and pronouns have no gender. The word for **he** and **she** are the same.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Farsi lacks some of the letters/sounds that occur in the English alphabet. They include **O**, **Q**, **U**, **W**, and **X**. This can cause much difficulty in pronunciation.
2. Initial voiceless **Th** becomes **T** or **S**.
think > tink or sink
3. The sound **W** is replaced by **V**.
want > vant
4. Final **D** becomes **T**.
bad > bat
5. Initial **G** may be replaced by **C**.
goat > coat
6. Short vowels will be difficult.

FRENCH

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. The rhythm in French is different from English, because the stress on words falls near or on the last syllable. English tends to stress the front syllables in connected speech patterns.
2. All nouns in French are masculine or feminine. Since "pencil" is masculine, its corresponding pronoun is "he." Since the noun "pen" is feminine, its corresponding pronoun is "she."
3. Adjectives and articles agree in gender and number with the noun they modify. Generally, descriptive adjectives follow the noun.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. The **Th** sound does not occur in French.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** becomes **S**.
think > sink
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** becomes **Z**.
them > zem
2. The **CH** sound does not occur in French. It is replaced with **SH**.
cheek > sheek

3. The sound of **J** as in "jeep" does not occur in French. It has the sound of "rouge".
4. The **R** sound is difficult. Many French speakers substitute the **R** made at the back of the throat - a "growled" sound. Some will substitute the trilled **R**.
5. **ING** as in "ring" does not occur. Ring may become rin.
6. Final **S** is not pronounced, and final **T** after a vowel is also not pronounced.
7. **P**, **T**, and **K** are not aspirated. They sound more like **B**, **D**, and **G** respectively.
cap > cab; bat > bad; back > bag

GERMAN

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. The rhythm and word stress in German are similar to English.
2. Word order can be very different from English, especially in a complex sentence where inverted word order occurs. An English sentence like "I will go downtown tomorrow " will become "Tomorrow will I downtown go ", in German.
3. Nouns, articles, and possessive adjectives are declined.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. The **TH** sound does not occur in German.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** will usually be replaced by **S**.
think > sink
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** will usually be replaced by **Z**.
that > zat
2. **W** has the sound of **V** in German.
want > vant
3. The letter **S** is difficult for Germans.
 - a. **S** before a vowel becomes **Z**.
so > zo
 - b. **S** followed by **P**, **T**, or **L** becomes **SH**.
spell > shpell; step > shtep; sleep > shleep
4. When **B**, **D**, or **G** occur at the end of an English word, the ESL student will usually use **P**, **T**, or **K** respectively.
cab > cap; bad > bat; bag > back
5. The **R** sound can be difficult. In German, the **R** is made at the back of the throat and has a "growled" sound.

HINDI

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Hindi uses a non-Roman script alphabet.
2. Hindi is written and read from left to right.
3. Various letters/sounds in the Hindi alphabet have no English equivalents.
4. Sentences are written with the subject first, sentence parts in the middle, and the verb last.
5. Helping verbs such as "to be" are not usually used in Hindi.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Voiced and voiceless **TH** becomes **T**.
three > tree; think > tink
2. The sound **P** is replaced by **B**.
pig > big
3. The sound **W** becomes **V**.
want > vant
4. The sound **CH** becomes **SH**.
cheep > sheep
5. Final consonants are often omitted, especially the **G** from **NG**.
doing > doin
6. Short vowel sounds cause much difficulty, since the ESL student does not hear the slight variations.
7. The consonants **F**, **Q**, **V**, **X**, and **Z** do not exist as separate characters in the Hindi alphabet.

HMONG

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. The alphabet uses Roman letters, and is written and read from left to right.
2. There are seven voice tones in Hmong. These voice tones give meaning and expression to the words in the language.
3. Usually only the present tense is used.
4. Nouns are not pluralized. The quantitative word before the noun indicates the plural idea. One girl, two girl, many girl.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Initial **B** and **P** have the same sound.
bad > bad; pad > bad
2. The **TH** sound causes difficulty.
 - a. Initial voiceless **TH** becomes **T**.
think > tink
 - b. Initial voiced **TH** becomes **D**.
that > dat
3. The sound of **T** in the middle of a word will become **D**.
better > bedder
4. The consonants **P**, **T**, and **K** in the final position are replaced with **B**, **D**, and **G** respectively, and become voiced.
hip > hib; hit > hid; sick > sig

HUNGARIAN

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. The sentence word order is basically the same as in English.
2. The Roman alphabet is used.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Some Hungarian vowel sounds have no English equivalents.
2. There is no sound for **W** in Hungarian. It is replaced with a **V** sound.
want > vant
3. The letter **J** has a **Y** sound.
January > Yanuary
4. The **TH** sound causes difficulty in Hungarian.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** becomes **S** or **T**.
think > sink or tink
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** becomes **Z** or **D**.
that > zat or dat
5. The letter **R** is trilled or rolled.

JAPANESE

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Japanese uses three writing systems. Two sets of characters are used for most written material and are written in vertical columns read from right to left.

The third system is written horizontally and read from left to right. It is phonetic and is used for adding foreign words to the language.

2. In Japanese, the subject is generally followed by other sentence parts, and the verb is last (subject, object, verb).

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. The letter **C** may be pronounced as **SH**.
cent > shent
2. The sound **W** is replaced by **V**.
want > vant
3. Initial **V** becomes **B**.
vine > bine
4. The **TH** sound does not occur in Japanese.
 - a. Initial voiceless **TH** becomes **S**.
think > sink
 - b. Initial voiced **TH** becomes **D**.
these > dese
 - c. Final **TH** becomes **S**.
with > wis
5. The **L** sound is usually replaced by an **R** type sound.
led > red

KOREAN

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Korean is related to Chinese and Japanese, but it has its own alphabet.
2. Traditionally Korean was written and read vertically; the more modern style is horizontal.
3. In a Korean sentence, the order is generally subject, other sentence parts, and the verb last. The word order in English is usually subject, verb, and object(s).

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. The **TH** sound does not occur in Korean.
 - a. Initial **TH** becomes **D**.
think > dink; that > dat
 - b. Final voiceless **TH** is replaced with **S**.
with > wis
 - c. Final voiced **TH** becomes **D**.
smooth > smood
2. The sound **L** is usually replaced with an **R** sound.
led > red
3. The sound **B** becomes **V**.
bat > vat
4. The **J** sound becomes a **Z** sound.
jeep > zEEP
5. The **H** or **WH** sounds become an **F** sound.
held > feld; white > fight

POLISH

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Nouns are feminine, masculine, or neuter; they are declined like Latin/German nouns.
2. Adjectives are also declined; they must agree in number and gender with the nouns.
3. There are three basic verb tenses; present, past, and future. Verbs are conjugated, so subject pronouns are not necessary.
4. There are no articles in Polish.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. In the initial position, the letter **J** will always sound like a **Y**.
January > Y January
2. There is no **TH** sound in Polish.
 - a. Initial voiceless **TH** can become **T** or **F**.
three > tree or free
 - b. Initial voiced **TH** usually becomes **D**.
that > dat
 - c. Final **TH** can be replaced by **S** or **T**.
with > wis or wit
3. The letter **W** becomes **V**.
want > vant
4. Since Polish has several sounds for **L**, it is hard for students to produce the English **L**.

PORTUGUESE

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Nouns are masculine, feminine, or neuter and are shown by the article and the ending on the noun.
2. Possessive pronouns and adjectives must agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify.
3. Descriptive adjectives usually follow the noun.
4. No helping verbs are used to form questions. Instead, the verb is placed in front of the subject (inverted).
5. All vowels are pronounced.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. **CH** will sound like **SH**.
cheep > sheep
2. The letter **H** is never pronounced.
3. Since Portuguese has many nasal sounds, this may cause the ESL student some problems in pronunciation.

RUSSIAN

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet.
2. Nouns have feminine, masculine, or neuter genders.
3. Nouns and adjectives are declined as in Latin/German. All nouns and adjectives must agree in gender and number.
4. There are fewer verb tenses in Russian than in English.
5. There are no articles in Russian.
6. The verb "to be" is almost never used in the present tense.
The car is red > car red.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. English short vowel sounds are very difficult.
2. There is no **TH** sound in Russian.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** becomes **S**.
think > sink
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** becomes **Z**.
that > zat
 - c. Voiceless final **TH** becomes **F**, **S**, **Z**, or **T**.
with > wif, wis, wiz, wit
 - d. Middle **TH** becomes **Z**.
father > fazer
3. There is no **W** sound in Russian. It is replaced by the **V** sound.
want > vant
4. The letter **R** is rolled or "growled" at the back of the throat.
5. A hard **G** sound replaces the letter **H** in foreign words.
Ohio > Ogio

SPANISH

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Usually descriptive adjectives follow the nouns they modify.
2. Adjectives and articles must agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify.
3. There is no neuter in Spanish. Since the word "car" is masculine, its corresponding pronoun is "he." Since the word "pen" is feminine, its corresponding pronoun is "she."
4. In a question or an exclamation, the punctuation both precedes AND follows the statement: ¡...! ¿...?
5. All vowels are pronounced.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. There are no voiceless consonant blends beginning with "S"; consequently, an "e" sound will precede these blends.
street > estreet; school > eschool
2. There is no SH sound. It becomes CH.
shoe > choe
3. The letters R and RR are formed in the front of the mouth and are trilled.
4. The letter H has no sound. The letter J always carries the H sound as does G before the vowels E or I.
5. The sound TH exists in Spanish, but the letters TH are never used together. D will have the TH sound wherever possible in a Spanish sentence. In Spanish, Z and C (before E or I) carry the sound TH.
6. In many cases V will sound like a soft B sound.
have > hab

TAGALOG (FILIPINO)

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. 300 years of Spanish control had an effect on the language. It is written and read horizontally from left to right, and it uses the Roman alphabet.
2. The sentence structure resembles English.
3. Tagalog uses three tenses - present, past, and future.
4. ESL students may be able to pronounce English well and quickly, even though their comprehension may still be poor.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. The letter **V** has a **B** sound.
vest > best; vat > bat
2. The letter **J** has a **Y** sound.
jam > yam
3. **S** and **Z** have the **S** sound.
zip > sip; zebra > sebra
4. All words ending in **TAIN** have the same sound as the ending of the word "maintain."
fountain > fountain
5. The **TH** sound is difficult.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** sounds like **T**.
think > tink
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** sounds like **D**.
these > dese
 - c. Final **TH** sounds like **T**.
tooth > toot
6. The letter **F** has a **P** sound.
fan > pan

THAI

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. In Thai, a script-like alphabet is used instead of the Roman alphabet. Writing and reading are done from left to right.
2. There are five voice tones in the Thai language; each tone changes the meaning of the word.
3. Nouns have no plural forms. This concept is conveyed, instead, through the use of quantitative words which follow the nouns.
six pencils > pencil six; two children > child two
4. Adjectives follow nouns.
5. There is no apostrophe. An "of" phrase shows possession.
My mother's hat > the hat of my mother.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Voiced final consonants in English are omitted. Multiple final consonant clusters are impossible.
2. Voiceless consonant blends at the beginning of English words are difficult. ESL students will tend to voice them.
stop > sadop; spend > sabend
3. The **TH** sound does not exist in the Thai language.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** becomes **T**.
three > tree
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** becomes **D**.
that > dat
 - c. Voiceless final **TH** becomes **T**.
with > wit
4. The letter **V** has a **W** sound.
visit > wisit
5. The letters **R** and **L** are interchanged because they sound the same.
free > flee; fly > fry
6. **CH** sounds like **SH**.
cheep > sheep

TURKISH

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. The Roman alphabet is used in Turkish.
2. Writing and reading are done from left to right.
3. Turkish and English have many similar consonant sounds. There are very few difficulties in this area.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. There are no initial consonant clusters in Turkish. The most difficult to learn are those beginning with **S**. ESL students will insert a vowel before or after the **S**.
store > istore or sitore
2. The **TH** sound does not occur in Turkish.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** becomes **S** or **T**.
thin > sin or tin
 - b. Voiced **TH** becomes **Z** or **D**.
that > zat or dat
3. The letters **V** and **W** are confusing. **V** is especially difficult to produce before vowels. **W** is replaced by **oo** as in noon.
white > ooite
4. Words ending in **B**, **D**, or **G** will be substituted with **P**, **T**, or **K** respectively.
nab > nap; lid > lit; pig > pik
5. Where **P**, **T**, or **K** occur in the middle of a word, **B**, **D**, or **G** will be substituted.
dipper > dibber; butter > budder; bicker > bigger

VIETNAMESE

A. SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR DIFFERENCES

1. Vietnamese differs from many Asian languages because it uses the Roman alphabet, and it is written and read from left to right.
2. There are six voice tones in the Vietnamese language, and all words are monosyllabic.
3. Vietnamese is patterned like Spanish and Portuguese in syntax, vowel usage, and word order; adjectives follow nouns.
4. There are no plural noun endings.

B. POSSIBLE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

1. Pronunciation may be choppy for ESL students because the English language has so many words of more than one syllable.
2. The **TH** sound is difficult.
 - a. Voiceless initial **TH** can become **T** or **S**.
think > tink or sink
 - b. Voiced initial **TH** can become **Z**.
that > zat
3. **CH** has the **Sh** sound.
cheep > sheep
4. The **L** can have the sound of **R**.
load > road
5. The letter **D** is confusing. It may be replaced by **J**, **Y**, or **Z**.
dig > zig; jig > yig or zig