

UZBEKISTAN - LAND OF RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

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ANNOTATION: *This article discusses Uzbekistan as a land of rich cultural heritage, exploring the country's history, traditions, and landmarks that contribute to its vibrant cultural identity. The annotation highlights Uzbekistan's strategic location along the ancient Silk Road, which facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures between East and West. It also delves into the country's architectural marvels, such as the historic cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, as well as its traditional crafts, such as pottery, embroidery, and carpet weaving. Additionally, the annotation touches on Uzbekistan's diverse cultural influences, including Persian, Arab, Turkish, and Russian, which have shaped the country's unique blend of traditions. Overall, the annotation emphasizes Uzbekistan as a treasure trove of cultural heritage that continues to inspire and captivate visitors from around the world.*

Key words: *historical places, culture, language, buildings, Silk Road, architecture, music, festivals, traditions, cuisine.*

Nestled in the heart of Central Asia lies a country that holds a treasure trove of cultural wonders - Uzbekistan. With a history spanning thousands of years, Uzbekistan is a land where the past seamlessly blends with the present. From magnificent architecture to vibrant traditions, this country is a living testament to the diverse and rich cultural heritage that has thrived within its borders. Uzbekistan has been a crossroads of civilizations for centuries. Uzbekistan is a land of rich cultural heritage, situated at the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road trade route. This Central Asian country boasts a diverse and vibrant history that has shaped its unique cultural identity over the centuries. It was a thriving part of the ancient Silk Road, a network of trade routes connecting the East and the West. This historical significance has left an indelible mark on the country's cultural fabric, creating a unique blend of influences from Persia, India, China, and the Arab world.

The territory of present-day Uzbekistan was the crossroads of Eurasia and a branch of the ancient Great Silk Road. It connected Europe and China, passed through the oasis settlements of Kokand, Samarkand, and Bukhara. Samarkand's history is one of the most ancient in the world. In the Samarkand region, archeologists have discovered an area where primitive men lived more than 10,000 years ago. In the South of Uzbekistan, a skeleton of the ancient man and some remarkable rock drawings were discovered. Traces of primitive men have also been found near Tashkent, in Khoresm, and in the Kara-Kalpak region. The historical culture of Central Asia is very rich. In antiquity, the peoples of Central Asia maintained trade and cultural relations with the peoples of China, India, Iran, the Arab countries, the Mediterranean area, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Siberia.

Architecture

One of the most well-known aspects of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage is its stunning architecture. The cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva are home to some of the most impressive examples of Islamic architecture in the world. The

Registan in Samarkand, with its intricate tile work and majestic domes, is a prime example of the country's architectural prowess. The massive walls and towers of the Ark in Bukhara, and the ancient city of Ichan Kala in Khiva are also must-see sites for any visitor to Uzbekistan. Registan is framed by three madrasas (Islamic schools) of distinctive Islamic architecture: the Ulugh Beg Madrasah (1417–1420), the Tilla-Kari Madrasah (1646–1660), and the Sher-Dar Madrasah (1619–1636).

One of the greatest monuments of Uzbek architecture is the Bibi-Khanym Mosque. It has 115 feet high portals, 165-foot minarets, 400 cupolas, and a large courtyard. The gates are made of seven different metals, and the building itself is made of marble and terracotta, and is decorated with mosaics and blue-gold frescoes. The period of the Timurid dynasty (14th to the 16th century) and the Shaybanid era (16th century) is famous for its colorful architectural designs, such as turquoise-colored domes, exemplified by the dome of the Gur-e-Amir (Timur's mausoleum in Samarkand).

The meaning of the word Shahrishabz is ‘the city of green’. The Shahrishabz city was historically known as kesh or kish and was a major city of Central Asia. Today the city is known to be the birthplace of 14th-century conqueror King Timur. Several monuments from the Timurid Dynasty can be seen here today, hence the city is listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. The well-known monuments of the place are Ak-Saray palace, Kok gumbaz mosque, Hazrat Imam complex, and the tomb of King Timur.

The ancient walled inner town of the city of Khiva is a part of the world heritage site. The old city is surrounded by 10m high plastered brick walls whose foundations were laid during the 10th century. There are more than 200 houses built during the 18th century. The city has several historic monuments such as mosques, madrasah, bathhouses, harems, etc.

Chor Minar is located in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. It is also known as the Madrasah of Khalif Niyazkul. A wealthy Bukharan of Turkmen, Khalif Niyazkul

built the structure in the 19th century under the rule of the Janid dynasty. The Chor Minar complex was used as a shelter and for religious purposes. Despite having an unusual outward form, the structure has a typical interior for a central Asian mosque.

The palace is named after Khudayar Khan, the last ruler of Kokand Khanate. Famously known as ‘The pearl of Kokand’. The palace was built in the year 1871 and comprised 4 acres of green land. The palace was designed to have seven magnificent courtyards and 119 rooms. Only 19 rooms and 2 courtyards today are open for public visits.

The Ulugbeg observatory was built during the 1420s by astronomer and mathematician Ulugbeg. The observatory is considered to be one of the finest observatories of the Islamic world. Skilled architects of that time Qazizada Rumi and Kashani were involved in the construction of the observatory. The observatory was built on a hill 21m above the ground. The cylindrical building entirely made of brick had a diameter of 46m and a height of 33m.

Traditions

Uzbekistan, along with Uzbek customs and traditions, is very rich in various holidays, festivals, and events! Uzbek people love and know how to celebrate. They celebrate weddings, anniversaries, and national holidays – any festive event in Uzbekistan cheerfully, hospitably with an abundance of delicious national dishes to the sounds of national instruments and traditionally with incendiary dances. The main public holiday is Independence Day – September 1. Two more significant holidays are the Constitution Day – December 8, and the Day of Remembrance and Honor – May 9. Some of the most significant Muslim holidays are *Eid-Al-Fitr* and *Eid-Al-Adha*.

At what time is pilaf cooked in the morning? The ancient ritual of morning pilaf is not only a festive but also a memorial pilaf. Only men attend to it. The preparation of morning pilaf begins in the evening of the previous day, with the rite of shredding carrots – “sabzi tughrar”.

The morning pilaf itself is prepared by the end of the morning prayer – “bomdod namozi”. It is the participants in the prayer who become the first to taste the freshly prepared morning pilaf. The beginning of the morning pilaf is announced by the sounds of “karnays” and “surnays” musical instruments. The guests sit down at the tables and, having completed the rite of wish – “fotikha”, proceed to the meal. First, they serve cakes and tea on the table, then pilaf in large plates, one plate is for two people. At the end of the meal, they make “fotikha” rite again. At the end of the morning pilaf, hosts present guests of honor with national men’s dressing gowns – “chapans”.

In any mahalla there is a wonderful ancient tradition of mutual assistance – “hashar”. As they say, all over the world, the residents of the mahalla voluntarily and unselfishly help each other if necessary. You need to build a house, improve a street or district, organize a morning pilaf/plov – hashar always comes to help. During happy and sorrow days, the residents of the mahalla try to stick together. As a rule, when someone invites for hashar, no one refuses. People work together, having time to complete a large amount of necessary work in one calendar day. And then they also organize lunch or dinner together. A wonderful oriental tradition-symbol of unity and sympathy!

Cuisine

Uzbek cuisine is rich and known for a wide usage of meat is peculiar to its **national part**. Traditionally, the **Uzbeks** prefer mutton, they eat beef very often, and more rarely they use horse meat for cooking some kinds of meal (*bologna and etc.*). Different patties (**somsa**) are peculiar to the **Uzbek cuisine**. They are often cooked from meat, which is cut into small pieces, mixed with a great deal of onion and strongly peppered. Patties with pumpkin and well peppered are spread. **Palov** (also known as pilaf/plov) is a pride of **Uzbek national cuisine**. Being cooked in all dining rooms and restaurants. Men often cook this favourite meal among the **Uzbeks**. Usually it's cooked from rice, and somewhere it is cooked from rice and mung

bean with meat, onion and yellow carrot (for example, in Bukhara). **Big amount of fat – vegetable or animal oil (from mutton or beef) must be added to palov.**

In conclusion, Uzbekistan is a land of rich cultural heritage that offers a unique blend of history, art, music, and cuisine. With its stunning architecture, vibrant art scene, and delicious cuisine, Uzbekistan is a must-visit destination for anyone interested in experiencing the beauty and diversity of Central Asia.

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