

The Edvectus Educator: An Introduction to Kazakhstan

A Guide to Successful Integration



The Facts and Figures

Official Name: The Republic of Kazakhstan

Location: Central Asia

Border: Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country bordering Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmeinstan (as well as some border along the Caspian Sea)

Area: 2,727,300 square Kms

Topography: Extremely varied, ranging from snowy mountains to flat lands to desert!

Capital: Astana (though it was Almaty until 1997)

Population: Almost 18 million

Main Language: Kazakhstan is a bilingual country and although the Kazakh Language is the official language, Russian is also used

Currency: Kazakhstani Tenge

Dialling Code: +7

Time Zone: West: UTC +5 and East: UTC +6

Government: Unitary State with the Head of State currently being President Nazarbayev

Main Airport: Almaty has the largest international airport but Astana also has an international airport

Main Carrier: Air Astana is the flagship airline of Kazakhstan

Drives on the: Right

Religion: Islam is the main religions followed by Russian Eastern Orthodox

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Unique Selling Points

Kazakhstan is the largest and most economically developed of the Central Asian countries. It has vast oil and mineral deposits and is investing revenue heavily in education and infrastructure.

Mountainous in the east and bordering the Caspian Sea in the west, Kazakhstan has a range of climates that range from colder in the north, and warmer and more moderate in the south with many areas of outstanding natural beauty.

It is a country where the population has a long history of balanced, harmonious, multi-ethnic social interaction, where both guests and locals are treated with respect during everyday life, where children are valued and elders are respected. Expatriates experience hospitality and warmth in this lovely country that had long been isolated and repressed under Soviet rule, but is now blossoming and looking forward to the future and outward from its borders with anticipation and curiosity.

Kazakhstan has a stable government and is very religiously and ethnically tolerant. Located on the Silk Road, Kazakhstan has a long tradition of welcoming visitors, and this stunning country has been relatively undiscovered by the west ... until now!

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan>

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Kazakhstan>

<http://www.visitkaz.kz>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdH1V5YJo54>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7adGzU0UOhE>



Astana

Astana is the second largest city in the country after the former capital, Almaty. It is located in the central northern part of Kazakhstan on the Ishim River in a very flat and fairly dry landscape. With long cold winters and temperatures often reaching about -30-35 degrees between December and March, Astana also has short, hot summers and temperatures reaching above 30 degrees. Since being given the title of the capital of Kazakhstan on 10th December 1997, the city has been developing rapidly and now boasts a range of internationally designed buildings mixed with old Soviet



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architecture. The population is largely made up of Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians and Germans. The city has several sporting teams and enjoys sports such as soccer, ice hockey, ice skating, speed skating, cycling, basketball, boxing and tennis. Transport is plentiful and you can navigate your way around the city and beyond by car, train, bus, taxi and – when you want to go further afield – by plane via the international airport. In terms of things to see and do, Astana has an array of museums (The President's Museum of Kazakhstan, The Museum of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the New National Museum for example), plus Palaces (such as the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, the Shabyt Palace and the Palace of

Independence). The Baiterek Tower is an example of the modern architecture that Astana is becoming known for. It is host to an aquarium, restaurant and amazing views of the city.



For shopping there are many malls in Astana, providing locals with supermarkets, retail shops, cinemas and food courts (complete with your regular western Fast-Food outlets such as KFC and Costa). There are also many restaurants, bars, cafes and about 10 nightclubs around the city.

The Duman Entertainment Complex has an Oceanarium, 3D theatre, dome area, shops and cafes, whilst the Astana Lifestyle @Ajar Centre boasts regular entertainment such as Astana Circus, Club nights with famous DJs, Drift Racing and M1 fights. Ak Bulak Sauna Complex is the perfect location in which to unwind after work and has several saunas, swimming pools, steam rooms, Jacuzzis, entertainment halls and massages,

drinks and food on offer.

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/northern-kazakhstan/astana>

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Astana>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R97QrMNHal>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4yjBMOxyXI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Bk46G8HPlw>



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Almaty

Almaty is the largest city in Kazakhstan and located in the mountainous southern area of the country. It is the cultural and financial centre of Central Asia and has a decent sized expatriate community. Almaty is about 30 minutes from a premier ski resort - Chimebulak – where you can enjoy skiing, snowboarding and ski jumping in the cold, winter months whilst the nearby Tien



Shan mountains provide ample opportunity for hiking, climbing and camping in the warmer months (where temperatures average about 30 degrees and occasionally up to 40 degrees). There is a cable car for spectacular mountain views and other tourist attractions within a few hours' drive. There are restaurants and cafes in Almaty as well as bars and clubs, markets, skating and, for relaxing, the Tau Spa in the mountains. Almaty has an international airport with flights to European and international destinations.

Find out more:

<http://www.almaty-kazakhstan.net/>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/almaty>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZiSQGG1Ps8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4EqyYRywUQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64OfnMRY6nM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLmra7CNfSM>



Atyrau

The city of Atyrau is at the mouth of the Ural River in the West of Kazakhstan, about 2700kms west of Almaty. With a population of about 170,000, the majority of residents are Kazakh and Russian. Atyrau is on the edge of the Caspian Sea and is famous for its oil and fish industries. The city is considered to be in both Asia and Europe as it is split by the Ural River and in the middle of the river is a sign marking the boundary between Europe and Asia. As with much of northern Kazakhstan, Atyrau enjoys hot summers and cold winters. The city is linked to many other Kazakh cities by train, although this does not include cities in the North West – including Astana. There is an international airport though with flights to the rest of Kazakhstan and beyond. In so much as entertainment and leisure activities, you will find malls, cafes, restaurants, ice skating rinks, swimming, fitness centres, mosques and museums. 50kms away there are ruins of a 16th-17th century medieval city of Saraidzhuk.

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Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/western-kazakhstan/atyrau>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT8185HCtrw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYZBwZmXKws>



Kostanay

Kostanay is a city in the northern part of Kazakhstan – just under 600kms North West of Astana - with a population of around 215,000. The city has an interesting historical-cultural heritage as well as the usual sporting and leisure amenities you would expect in a city that include restaurants, bars, clubs and shopping facilities. The region enjoys warm, dry summers and cold winters. There is an international airport serving the city.



Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/northern-kazakhstan>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMsv17ybxso>



Semey

The city of Semey lies in the north east of Kazakhstan, next to the Russian border and about 1000kms North of Almaty and 750kms east of the capital city of Astana. It is a university town with a population of around 330,000 people - and a large expatriate population linked to the university. Semey enjoys warm summers (in the high 20s) and cold winters and is a city with a rich cultural heritage with several well-known Kazakhstani writers, poets and teachers hailing from the region. There are several museums (such as the Dostoevsky, Abay and Fine Arts museums, and architecture, statues and mosques to enjoy as well as cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs. Unfortunately Semey is also associated with Soviet Nuclear testing which took place between 1949 and 1989. Information NIS provide to teachers is that that the area around Semey is safe and the testing was done many years ago. The local government conducts regular tests to ensure that the radiation levels are normal. Currently Semey is experiencing a construction boom, with many new restaurants and entertainment venues opening in the city. Just this school year there have been three new restaurants, two new shopping centers and a bowling alley with a nice restaurant.

Find out more:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/533881/Semey>

<http://aboutkazakhstan.com/semey-city>

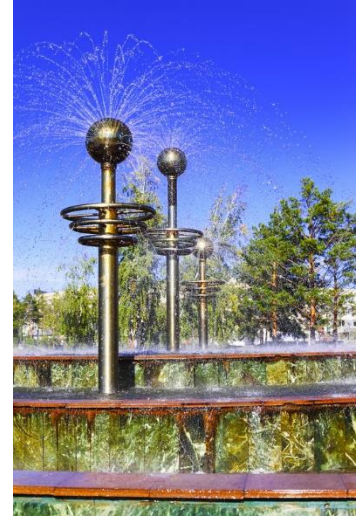
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6-jM1873h0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-RsUbmG4O0>



Pavlodar

Pavlodar is one of the oldest cities in Kazakhstan founded in 1720 and known for its valuable salt resources. It is located in north eastern Kazakhstan about 450kms north of the capital city, Astana, along the Irtysh River. With a population of around 330,000 (largely made up of Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians and Germans) it is a fairly quiet, mainly industrial city (specifically oil, steel and aluminium) but it is also an important cultural and economic centre for Kazakhstan. Pavlodar has a moderate climate with long cold winters and hot summers. Transport links include trains, trams, buses, minibuses and there is also Pavlodar airport servicing the city. Football and chess are popular sporting activities in this city and in terms of leisure activities there are sightseeing opportunities with many churches and mosques (such as the Mashkhur-Jusup Mosque) as well as the cathedral. There are also museums, theatres (such as the Chekhov Drama Theatre) and the Bayanaul National Park. It is a green city with around 33 parks and many boulevards and there is apparently a nice walking trail along the river. Pavlodar is said to have quite an active nightlife with several nightclubs as well as bars and restaurants. There are some major shopping centres and bazaars to enjoy as well.



Find out more:

<http://visitkazakhstan.kz/en/guide/main/12/0/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9C5p6HBPF2E>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf5EQwR-0_Q



Kyzylorda

Kyzylorda is in south western Kazakhstan, about 400kms from the Aral Sea. It was founded in 1820 as a fortress and then renamed in 1925 when it had a brief, four year spell as the capital of Kazakhstan before handing the title to Almaty in 1929. The population of Kyzylorda is about 190,000. The region is partially flat desert lands that flower in spring and experience a light dusting of snow in winter. The climate – as is the case with many regions in Kazakhstan – is hot and dry in the summer with lengthy, cold winters. Kyzylorda is well-known for its production of rice although oil and gas also contribute to its present-day economy.

The city is one of the Silk Road historical centres and there are around 543 historical, religious and architecturally interesting monuments in the Kyzylorda Region plus some Soviet history and you can see all of the old Lenin Statues displayed in one city centre park as well as some Soviet Murals on the sides of buildings. The Regional Museum is a notable attraction and there are, of

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course, other museums, mosques, many sporting stadiums, complexes, gyms, pubs, restaurants and shopping facilities. An airport, train station (the best in Asia according to the Lonely Planet!) and obviously roads link the city to other locations within Kazakhstan and beyond.

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/southern-kazakhstan/kyzylorda>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ4d6FBZNnE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8XouPCEVvo>



Karaganda

Karaganda is situated towards the north of Kazakhstan and about 220kms south east of Astana. It is one of the larger cities after Almaty, Astana and Shymkent with a population of about 470,000. The city has many German inhabitants but overall 100+ nationalities live there. Like much of Kazakhstan, Karaganda enjoys warm summers and cold winters. It's an industrial city (coal being the most notable industry) but it also has a lot of parks (such as the large Central Park spread over 2kms with a large lake in the centre) and tree-lined streets and apparently is a city with quite a lively 'buzz'. There is theatre, hockey, football, a zoo, museums (such as the Ecological or Oblast museums), restaurants, live music, clubs/bars and historical and cultural monuments and places of interest to enjoy.

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/northern-kazakhstan/karaganda>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RM0ESH-5eA>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI_f77kQWos



Uralsk

Uralsk – or Oral as the city is also known – is in western Kazakhstan on the European bank of the Ural River (and so considered to be in Europe). It has a population of about 350,000 which is largely made up of ethnic Kazakhs and Russians. There are also many British and Italian expatriates who work in the nearby oil and gas fields. It is an industrial city with engineering, machine building, food and construction industries. Being in such close proximity to Russia the Russian influence is still strong and this can be seen in the beautiful and traditional Russian architecture, churches, the Russian Drama Theatre and museums. Kirov Park is apparently a lovely wooded park with a summer funfair (including an antique Ferris wheel). Here you can

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enjoy boating on the river during the warm summers and skating and skiing during the cold, snowy winters. Pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants cater for the local and expatriate populations and regular trains link the city to Almaty, Astana, Moscow and Kiev. There is also an international airport.

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/western-kazakhstan/uralsk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCSqhiYTKAw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jWCL1SqiK4>



Ust-Kamenogorsk

Ust-Kamenogorsk (or Oskeman which is its Kazakhstani translation) is a city near the Russian border in eastern Kazakhstan. Located in the foothills of the Rudny Altay Mountains it's in a beautiful region of Kazakhstan with coniferous forests and lakes (and very cold winters!). The city itself has a population of about 322,000 and the people are friendly (they apparently like Australians in particular!) and the food, honey (which the Altai region is known for), beer and vodka is very good! The city was a Russian fort in the early 18th century but these days is a major centre of nonferrous metallurgy (lead, zinc, titanium and magnesium) with important associated research institutes and labs. There is also food processing and machine building industries and training institutes for teachers, construction and road building plus a hydroelectric station on the Irtysh River. Ust-Kamenogorsk has good transport links with trams, trains, buses and an airport. Within the city, there are several cinemas, drama theatres, museums, sports stadiums, local bazaars. The city is home to Kazakhstan's most famous ice hockey team – the Kazzinc-Torpedo hockey team.



Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/eastern-kazakhstan>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGq9tFilyQs>

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Shymkent

Shymkent is the capital city of southern Kazakhstan and is just 120kms north of Tashkent in Uzbekistan and 690kms west of Almaty. It is the third largest city in Kazakhstan with a population of about 630,000 – largely made up of Kazakhs, Russians, Uzbeks and Tatars. Shymkent enjoys hot summers, with temperatures usually reaching the 30s, and cold (though warmer than most other Kazakhstani cities) winters with temperatures averaging around -1-5 C. It was a major rail junction in the Turkestan-Siberian Railway and the old city was founded back in the 12th Century. Today it is a lively, vibrant city bustling with activity and things to do. There are leafy-green streets and 8 parks dotted around the city - including a waterpark that is popular amongst adults and children alike. There is also a children's railway, zoo, cinemas, museums, theatres, mosques, memorials, a hockey/ice rink, markets, the Spartak (which is a complex with an outdoor pool, soccer field and basketball courts), bars, clubs, restaurants, bowling and pool halls and shopping centres which include the Mega Mall featuring an indoor skating rink, cinema and food court. Outside of Shymkent it is mountainous and there are some interesting daytrips within easy reach such as the Sauran ancient city ruins, the Sairam Mausoleum and Turkestan (a beautiful Muslim mausoleum and new historical museum).



Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/southern-kazakhstan/shymkent>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3r64pa-VXQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVdK6uupf2U>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL_fIVII3Hs



Kokshetau

Kokshetau is one of the smaller cities in Kazakhstan with a population of about 135,000. It's about 290kms north of Astana and located in a pretty region linked to other areas in Kazakhstan by the airport, trains and buses. Warm in summer but cold and frosty during the long winters there is an ice-carved village and ice slide to enjoy during the colder months and an amusement park in Central Park during summer. Year-round activities include bowling, gyms/sporting activities, cafes, bars and restaurants. The city's industry is in food production, water and alcohol plus there is gold mining close by.

Find out more:

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<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/northern-kazakhstan>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngutJR7HvfA>



Taldykorgan



Taldykorgan is in the Almaty region – just north of the city of Almaty - and although it has a small population under 150,000 (mostly Kazakh and Russia), it has a surprising number of amenities in the city. There is a new mall, several parks, bazaars and restaurants, a tennis centre and sporting events and activities such as football, hiking and cycling. The population is mostly Muslim but about 20% are Christian (Russian Orthodox) so there are churches as well as Mosques to be found. There are three ski resorts in the Almaty province (Takeli,

Shymbulak and Ak-Bulak), all within a short drive.

Find out more:

<http://www.advantour.com/kazakhstan/taldykorgan.htm>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9B-w71Otv8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvfCnFthfxl>



Petropavlovsk

Petropavlovsk is a small city in the mountainous northern region of Kazakhstan on the Ishim River close to the Russian border. It has a population of just over 200,000. Another former Russian fort founded in the 18th Century, it was an important silk and carpet trading centre. These days it produces railway carriages, equipment for the oil extracting companies and also has a significant food production industry. It is connected to other cities - including Moscow and Astana - by rail, and there is also an airport. For things to see and do, there are Russian statues and monuments, a theatre, volcanos (for the more adventurous to climb), museums (including a volcano museum), boating, fishing and whale



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watching on Aracha Bay. You can also enjoy ice-skating and bowling and skiing at the Krasnaya Sopka Resort. There is also the usual array of restaurants, cafes, bars and shops.

Find out more:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/454510/Petropavlovsk>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/russia/russian-far-east/petropavlovsk-kamchatsky>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCnjxiikG64>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWdjY0V7xRQ>



Taraz

Taraz is on the Talas River in southern Kazakhstan not far from the Kyrgyzstan border. The city's population is just over 330,000. Taraz is thought to be one of the most ancient cities in Kazakhstan and is over 2000 years old. As well as many ancient architectural monuments, historical sights and the Regional Historical Museum to see, there is a nearby visit to Akyrtyas ancient town, several Mausoleums, 2 theatres and Shakhristan market to explore. Taraz has its own football team plus a new international airport.

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/southern-kazakhstan/taraz>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfgT-NYTz5A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8U5yggjhxE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cu5xaciMLRY>



Aktau

Aktau is situated in the south west of Kazakhstan on the Caspian Sea. It is one of the bigger cities in west Kazakhstan with a population of around 167,000. With an international airport, train station, buses and taxis it is an accessible and popular tourist location due to its warm summers, mild winters and sandy beaches. With plenty to do - from hiking in the rocky hills, to swimming, fishing or sailing, walking or jogging or walking through the tree-lined, leafy green alleys and botanical gardens - Aktau is a modern city (only about 40 years old) with plenty of amenities including shopping malls, bazaars, restaurants, ice skating, clubs, bars, live music, theatre, monuments, museums, bowling, pool, beach volleyball, gyms,



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hot springs and mud baths. Due to the large amount of oil and gas exported from Kazakhstan's only port, the city has boomed in recent years and is known as the 'Pearl of the Caspian Sea'.

Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/western-kazakhstan/aktau>

<https://aktauexpats.wordpress.com/>

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Aktau>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckJe6BN7e3s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tK1Y4oAeNY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fafIJN9iZz0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYZBwZmXKws>



Aktobe

Aktobe is a city in the north west of Kazakhstan on the Ilek River. It is located south of the Ural mountains and so is in Eastern Europe. The city has a population of about 372, 000 and it is a city that has developed extensively, both during the Second World War as factories from the Ukraine and Moscow relocated here, and also, in more recent times, due to the expansion of the oil industry. Agriculture (beef, mutton and dairy) is also an important contributor to the region's economy. Rail, road and air link Aktobe to other cities in Kazakhstan and beyond. The land around Aktobe is mostly flat land with low hills and rivers and natural vegetation flow through the countryside but in the southern part of the region, it is semi-desert. The climate is humid with much variation between seasons and temperatures can get as low as -48 in winter (though the daily average is about -16) and as high as the low 40's in summer (though the daily average is more like 30 degrees). There are theatres, mosques, churches, museums, a football stadium and local soccer team (which has several times been the champion team of Kazakhstan), a regional philharmonic society, children's puppet theatre and a planetarium located in the city. There are also various parks, recreation parks, public gardens, alley and boulevards. In addition there are clubs, entertainment complexes, bars and many restaurants and cafes of national and international cuisine.



Find out more:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/kazakhstan/western-kazakhstan/aqtobe>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfQFdZVjbT8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RpYpaZHHgs>

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