



Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, located at 41° N, 75° E.
- We have traveled 26,208 miles (42,178 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

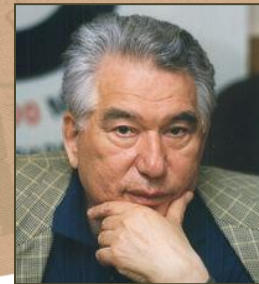
- Most of Kyrgyzstan was formally annexed to Russia in 1876. Kyrgyzstan became a Soviet republic in 1936 and achieved independence in 1991 when the USSR dissolved.
- Kyrgyzstan has a population of 5.6 million. Kyrgyz is the largest ethnic group at 65%. Uzbek accounts for 14% and Russian 13%. The Kyrgyz ethnic group is a traditionally nomadic people, believed to have originally emigrated from southern Siberia.
- Bishkek is the capital with 850,000 people. Thirty-five percent of the population lives in cities.
- The city of Osh served as an important commercial center on the Silk Road, the trade route between Europe and China.
- Seventy-five percent of the population is Muslim with Russian Orthodox accounting for another 20%.
- Literacy rate is 98.7% with males at 99.3% and females at 98.1%.
- Raising livestock was, and still remains, the main agricultural activity in the country. Kyrgyzstan exports cotton, wool, meat, tobacco, gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, electricity (hydro), machinery and shoes. The unemployment rate is 18%.
- *Manas* is a 500,000 line poem. It tells the epic story of the migration of the Kyrgyz people.



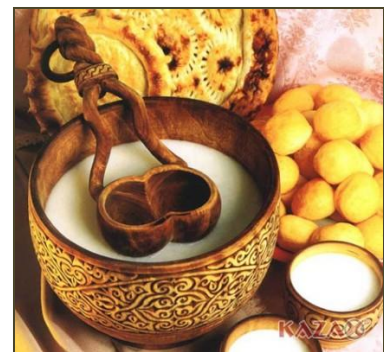
Relics of the Soviet-era
(Source: Flickr.com/livepine)

Chingiz Aitmatov

The most famous person from Kyrgyzstan is a writer, **Chingiz Aitmatov**. He is better known than any sportsmen, politicians and musicians.



Source: PocketCultures



The most famous national drink is horse milk "kumyz" (Source: PocketCultures)



Horses play in the steppe of Kyrgyzstan
(Source: Flickr.com/dwrawlinson)

Issyk Kul

Issyk Kul is a lake that has formed in a basin with no outflow to other bodies of water such as rivers, seas or oceans. It is located in the northern Tian Shan Mountains in eastern Kyrgyzstan. It is the tenth largest lake in the world by volume and the second largest saline lake after the Caspian Sea. It is 113 miles (182 kilometers) long and 37 miles (60 kilometers) wide.

Although it is surrounded by snow-capped peaks, it never freezes; hence its name, which means "hot lake" in the Kyrgyz language.



Source: Wikipedia.org

Nature and Environment

- Kyrgyzstan (formerly Kirghizia) is a rugged country situated in Central Asia. Mountains cover approximately 75 percent of the entire country. Landlocked and mountainous, Kyrgyzstan is bordered by Kazakhstan in the north, Uzbekistan in the west, Tajikistan in the southwest and China in the east. It is slightly smaller than South Dakota.
- Fergana Valley has been known for its legendary horses since the ancient times.
- Kyrgyzstan is located in the world's largest steppe region, known as the "Great Steppe". This area includes portions of Russia, Central Asia and the Ukraine. A steppe typically consists of grassland plains without any trees, except near lakes and rivers.
- Pamir-Alai and Tian Shan (meaning Heavenly Mountains) are two major mountain ranges. The highest point in Kyrgyzstan is Peak Jengish Chokusu at 24,406 feet (7,439 meters).
- Kyrgyzstan is home to Inylchek Glacier, one of the largest glaciers in the world. It is 36 miles (58 kilometers) long.
- The walnut-fruit forests of Kyrgyzstan are amongst the largest natural forests globally.

Our Plans

- We are spending a couple of days in the capital city of Bishkek before setting out on our next trek in the Tian-Shan Mountains of Kyrgyzstan. We will be visiting several lakes, including Issyk Kul. After our trek we will be moving on to the country of Uzbekistan.
- What would you like to know about Kyrgyzstan? Send us your ideas and we will try to include them!

More Information

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>
- <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp061108.shtml>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steppe>
- <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/kgtoc.html>
- <http://www.lakescientist.com/learn-about-lakes/lake-facts.html>
- <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kyrgyz-republic>
- <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/kyrgyzstan.htm>

Yurts

A yurt is a portable, bent wood-framed dwelling structure traditionally used by nomads in the steppes of Central Asia. The structure is usually covered by layers of fabric and sheep's-wool felt for insulation and weatherproofing.



Sources: Wikipedia.org,
Flickr.com/dwrawlinson

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