WHO SPEAKS UZBEK?

Uzbeks are the most numerous Turkic people in Central Asia. They predominantly live in Uzbekistan, a landlocked country of Central Asia that shares borders with Kazakhstan to the west and north, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the east, and Afghanistan and Turkmenistan to the south. Many Uzbeks can also be found in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China.

SOME USEFUL PHRASES IN TURKMEN

Salam. Meniň adym Jon.

Siziň adyňyz näme?
[θiˈdiŋ ˈadɨŋitʃ näme] /Thîthing adîngîth näme?/ What is your name?

Ýagdaýlaryňyz gowumy?
[ˌjaɣdaɪˈlarɨŋɨð goˈwumy] /Yagdîlarĭngîth gōwūmĭ?/ How are you doing?

Siz nireden? Men Indianadan.
[θiˈðiŋ ˈnirɛˌdɛn mɛn ˌindiˈanadan] /Thîth nîrĕdĕn? Mën ĭndîanadan/ Where are you from? I am from Indiana.

Sizden haýyş, maňa kömek ediň!
[ˌjaɣdaɪˈlarɨŋɨð goˈwumy] /Yagdîlarĭngîth gōwūmĭ?/ Please help me!

Hajathana nirede?
[χaˈʤat•haˌna ˈnirɛˌdɛ] /Hajat-hana nîrĕdĕ?/ Where is the bathroom?

Bagyšlaŋ!
[ˈbaɣɨʃˌlaŋ] /Bagĭshlang!/ Excuse me.

Köp sag boluň!
[kɔp ˈθaɣ boˈluŋ] /Kôp thag bolûng!/ Thank you very much!

Hoş, sag boluň!
[χoʃ ˈθaɣ boˈluŋ] /Hôsh thag bolûng!/ Good-bye!

FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN MORE ABOUT TURKMENS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

1. Turkmen is spoken natively by about 7 million people worldwide, with approximately 1 million more speaking it as a second language. The majority of Turkmen speakers are located in Eurasia and Central Asia, with the highest concentrations located in Turkmenistan, Iran, and Afghanistan.

2. A member of the West Oghuz branch of the Turkic language family, Turkmen shares many structural features with other Turkic languages, such as SOV word order, vowel harmony, and agglutinative structure.

3. Because of its similarity to other Turkic languages, studying Turkmen can actually help you learn Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek!

4. Turkmenistan possesses the world’s fourth largest reserves of natural gas and substantial oil resources, and is therefore a most prominent trade partner with the United States. As business partnerships with Turkmenistan and the USA grow, this creates a demand for Americans who are fluent in Turkmen.

5. Turkmenistan is a region of numerous archeological sites of great interest. The Turkmen cities of Nisa, Anau, and Merv have been declared as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO and were once part of the ancient Bronze Age Bactria-Margian Archeological Complex and later the Scythian, Greek, Persian, and Arab empires.

ABOUT US

The Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University develops materials for learning and teaching a wide variety of Central Asian languages.

For more information, go to celcar.indiana.edu.

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Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR)
T urkmen vocabulary has been influenced by Arabic, Persian, and Russian. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Russian loanwords in Turkmen have been replaced with new Turkmen ones.

WHAT ALPHABET DO TURKMENS USE?
Similar to other Central Asian Turkic languages, Turkmen has been written in a number of alphabets. Textual remains of early Turkic varieties from in and around Turkmenistan are attested in a variety of scripts, including the Old Turkic runic alphabet and others. Before 1929, Turkmens used the Perso-Arabic script to write their language. Then for a short time between 1929 and 1938, they adopted a Latin script before switching to a Cyrillic script under Soviet Rule, which they used until the 1990s when the Latin script was reintroduced. Today Turkmen people who live in Turkmenistan and in other post-Soviet states use a modified Latin script, Täze Elipbiý, however those who live in Iran and Afghanistan use the Arabic script.

WHAT IS TURKMEN CULTURE LIKE?
Throughout its history, the territory of what is now Turkmenistan, has been part of the Persian, Greek, Arab, Mongol, Russian, and Soviet empires, thus the local people and their traditions have been influenced for millennia by cultures and civilizations from Greece to China, and from Middle East to Siberia.

In the 8th century, due to Arab influences, much of Turkmenistan converted to Islam. Today, majority of Turkmens identify themselves as Sunni Muslims. However, due to its Soviet past, Turkmen society is relatively secular.

Traditionally, Turkmen are a nomadic people known for their horsemanship. The Turkmen horse, Akhal-Teke, was bred for war and raiding and is considered to be one of the oldest surviving horse breeds. Amazingly resilient and tough, they became part of Turkic oral epics, legends and myths. It is said that the Chinese called them Heavenly Horses and waged wars just to acquire a few. In fact, some say owning such a horse was the dream of every noble Greek and Roman. Today, the Akhal-Teke breed is Turkmenistan’s national emblem and a source of cultural pride for the Turkmen people.

Carpet-weaving is an important traditional Turkmen art form. Turkmen carpets and rugs are usually made of sheep or camel wool and are known for their rich colors, high quality, and durability. But it is the unique styles of patterns designed and produced by each tribe that really make these rugs stand out. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Bukhara style woven by the Tekke tribe.

Like many other Central Asian peoples, Turkmen are a very family and community oriented society, and individuals are commonly identified with reference to their family and lineage. It is not surprising to see two or three generations living under the same roof. Furthermore family elders are highly respected and consulted for all important decisions.