

AZERBAIJAN



Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++994

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Capital: Baku Time: GMT + 5

Background: Azerbaijan - a nation of Turkic Muslims - has been an independent republic since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Despite a cease-fire, in place since 1994, Azerbaijan has yet to resolve its conflict with Armenia over the Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh enclave (largely Armenian populated). Azerbaijan has lost almost 20% of its territory and must support some 750,000 refugees as a result of the conflict. Corruption is ubiquitous and the promise of wealth from Azerbaijan's undeveloped petroleum resources remains largely unfulfilled.

Location: Southwestern Asia, bordering the Caspian Sea, between Iran and Russia
Map References: Commonwealth of Independent States

Area: total: 86,600 sq km land: 86,100 sq km water: 500 sq km note: includes the exclave of Naxcivan Autonomous Republic and the Nagorno-Karabakh region; the region's autonomy was abolished by Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet on 26 November 1991

Natural Resources: petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, nonferrous metals, alumina

Population: 7,748,163 (July 2000 est.)

Nationality: noun: Azerbaijani(s) adjective: Azerbaijani

Ethnic Groups: Azeri 90%, Dagestani 3.2%, Russian 2.5%, Armenian 2%, other 2.3% (1998 est.) note: almost all Armenians live in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region

Religions: Muslim 93.4%, Russian Orthodox 2.5%, Armenian Orthodox 2.3%, other 1.8% (1995 est.) note: religious affiliation is still nominal in Azerbaijan; percentages for actual practicing adherents are much lower

Languages: Azeri 89%, Russian 3%, Armenian 2%, other 6% (1995 est.)

Economy: Azerbaijan is less developed industrially than either Armenia or Georgia, the other Caucasian states. It resembles the Central Asian states in its majority Muslim population, high structural unemployment, and low standard of living. The economy's most prominent products are oil, cotton, and natural gas. Production from the Caspian oil field declined through 1997 but registered an increase in 1998-99. Negotiation of 19 production-sharing arrangements (PSAs) with foreign firms, which have thus far committed \$60 billion to oil field development, should generate the funds needed to spur future industrial development. Oil production under the first of these PSAs, with the Azerbaijan International Operating Company, began in November 1997. Azerbaijan shares all the formidable problems of the former Soviet republics in making the transition from a command to a market economy, but its considerable energy resources brighten its long-term prospects. Baku has only recently begun making progress on economic reform, and old economic ties and structures are slowly being replaced. An obstacle to economic progress, including stepped up foreign investment, is the continuing conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Trade with Russia and the other former Soviet republics is declining in importance while trade is building up with Turkey, Iran, UAE, and the nations of Europe. Growth in 2000 should match growth in 1999. Long-term prospects will depend on world oil prices and the location of new pipelines in the region.

Industries: petroleum and natural gas, petroleum products, oilfield equipment; steel, iron ore, cement; chemicals and petrochemicals; textiles

Currency: 1 manat = 100 gopiks

Railways: total: 2,125 km in common carrier service; does not include industrial lines broad gauge: 2,125 km 1.520-m gauge (1,278 km electrified) (1993)

Highways: total: 24,981 km paved: 23,057 km unpaved: 1,924 km (1998 est.)

Ports and Harbors: Baku (Baki)

Airports: 69 (1996 est.) Airports - with paved runways: total: 29 over 3,047 m: 2, 2,438 to 3,047 m: 6 1,524 to 2,437 m: 17 914 to 1,523 m: 3 under 914 m: 1 (1996 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 40 914 to 1,523 m: 7 under 914 m: 33 (1996 est.)

Visa: required by all except nationals of CIS

Duty Free: permitted goods: 1000 cigaretters or 1000g of tobacco products, 1.5 litres of spirits, 2 litres of wine,a reasonable quantity of perfume for personal use, goods to the value of US\$10,000

Health: cholera, typhoid, and polio precautions. Risk of malaria. All water should be regarded as being a potential health risk

HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS

BAKU

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