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Information note about Kyrgyzstan



Global Technology Solutions
Logistics Institute of Central Asia



KÜHNE FOUNDATION



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Kyrgyzstan, officially - Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyz Republic, abbreviation - KR), is a country in Central Asia, lying in the Tian Shan and Pamir mountain ranges. In the north of the border with Kazakhstan, in the west - with Uzbekistan, in the southwest - with Tajikistan, and in the east and southeast - with China.

The largest ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan is the Kyrgyz, constituting the majority of the country's 7 million inhabitants, with notable communities of Uzbeks and Russians comprising significant minorities. The history of Kyrgyzstan encompasses numerous cultures and empires. Despite being geographically isolated due to its extremely steep topography, Kyrgyzstan was a part of the Silk Road and other commercial routes that connected it to other great civilizations.

Kyrgyzstan, which is home to a number of tribes and clans, has occasionally been subjugated by more powerful groups, such as the Turkic nomads, who can trace their history back to numerous Turkic states. The Yenisei Kyrgyz Khaganate was its original name. Kyrgyzstan was eventually taken over by the Mongols in the 13th century; it later restored its independence but was again attacked by the Dzungar Khanate. The Kyrgyz and Kipchaks were an essential component of the Kokand Khanate following the collapse of the Dzhungars. After Kyrgyzstan joined the Russian Empire in 1876, the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic was established in 1936 as a component of the Soviet Union. 1990 saw the USSR elect Askar Akayev as president, a pro-independence candidate, as a result of democratic reforms implemented by Mikhail Gorbachev. The independence of Kyrgyzstan was declared on August 31, 1991.

Officially, Kyrgyzstan was a unitary presidential republic following independence; however, following the Tulip Revolution, it changed its name to a unitary parliamentary republic. Before 2021, it was governed as a semi-presidential republic and progressively developed an executive president. The nation has endured ethnic wars, uprisings, economic difficulties, transitional governments, political turmoil, and more throughout its history.

Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation of Turkic States, the Türksoy community and the United Nations. It is a developing country ranked 118th in the Human Development Index. The country is rated as 123th out of 160 countries measured in the Logistics Performance Index (2023). The country's transitional economy is heavily dependent on deposits of gold, coal, and uranium.



Regions and districts of Kyrgyzstan

1. Batken region:
 - ❖ Leilek district (#1, district center - Razzakov)
 - ❖ Kadamzhai district (#3, district center - Kadamzhai)
 - ❖ Batken district (#2, district center - Batken)
2. Jalal-Abad region:
 - ❖ Aksy district (#14, district center - Kerben)
 - ❖ Ala-Buka district (#15, district center - Ala-Buka)
 - ❖ Bazar-Korgon district (#12, district center - Bazar-Korgon)
 - ❖ Nookan district (#13, district center - Massy)
 - ❖ Suzak district (#11, district center - Suzak)
 - ❖ Toguz-Toro district (#18, district center - Kazarman)
 - ❖ Toktogul district (#17, district center - Toktogul)
 - ❖ Chatkal district (#16, district center - Kanysh-Kiya)
3. Issyk-Kul region:
 - ❖ Ak-Suu district (#40, district center - Ak-Suu)
 - ❖ Jeti-Oguz district (#39, district center - Kyzyl-Suu)
 - ❖ Issyk-Kul district (#36, district center - Cholpon-Ata)
 - ❖ Tonsky district (#38, district center - Bokonbaevo)
 - ❖ Tyupsky district (#37, district center - Tyup)
4. Naryn region:
 - ❖ Ak-Tala district (#33, district center - Baetovo)
 - ❖ At-Bashi district (#35, district center - At-Bashi)
 - ❖ Zhumgal district (#31, district center - Chaek)
 - ❖ Kochkor district (#32, district center - Kochkorka)
 - ❖ Naryn district (#34, district center - Naryn)
5. Osh region:
 - ❖ Alai district (#8, district center - Gulcha)
 - ❖ Aravan district (#6, district center - Aravan)
 - ❖ Kara-Kuldzha district (#10, district center - Kara-Kuldzha)
 - ❖ Kara-Suu district (#7, district center - Kara-Suu)
 - ❖ Nookat district (#5, district center - Nookat)
 - ❖ Uzgen district (#9, district center - Uzgen)
6. Talas region:
 - ❖ Bakai-Ata district (#20, district center - Bakai-Ata)
 - ❖ Aitmatovsky district (#19, district center - Kyzyl-Adyr)
 - ❖ Manas district (#21, district center - Pokrovka)
 - ❖ Talas district (#22, district center - Talas)

7. Chui region:

- ❖ Alamudunsky district (#27, district center - Lebedinovka)
- ❖ Zhaiyl district (#24, district center - Kara-Balta)
- ❖ Keminsky district (#30, district center - Kemin)
- ❖ Moskovsky district (#25, district center - Belovodskoye)
- ❖ Panfilovsky district (#23, district center - Kaindy)
- ❖ Sokuluk district (#26, district center - Sokuluk)
- ❖ Chui district (#29, district center - Tokmok)
- ❖ Issyk-Ata district (#28, district center - Kant)





Flag of Kyrgyzstan

The National flag of Kyrgyzstan represents a red cloth in the center of which a round solar disk with forty uniformly diverging rays of golden color are placed. Inside the solar disk, there is a red Tunduk of Kyrgyz yurt.



- Red color: valour and courage
- Yellow sun: light, eternity of existence, peace and wealth
- Kyrgyz Yurt: hospitality, warmth
- 40 rays: 40 Kyrgyz tribe

Kyrgyzstan climate and weather

Kyrgyzstan's climate is predominantly sunny, with an average of around 70 days of rainfall per year. The climate is continental. The climate across different regions varies significantly. For instance, the Fergana Valley in the southwest is subtropical and scorching in summer, often reaching up to 40°C (104°F). Moving northward, the foothills experience temperate weather, while the Tian Shan region exhibits a range from dry continental to polar climates, depending on altitude. In the coldest regions, winter temperatures dip below freezing for about 40 days, and even some desert areas witness continuous snowfall during this time. In lowland areas, temperatures fluctuate from approximately -6°C (21°F) in January to 24°C (75°F) in July.

Traveling to Kyrgyzstan: getting there by air

- Kyrgyzstan's national carrier is Air Kyrgyzstan (www.air.kg)
- The top airline brands that operate from Bishkek airport frequently are – Ural Airlines, Turkish Airlines, and Manas Air.
- Aeroflot (www.aeroflot.com) operates a direct flight from Moscow, with connections available from the UK and the USA.



Main Airports

Kyrgyzstan has 11 airports, among which:

- **Manas International Airport** is the main international airport in Kyrgyzstan, located 25 kilometers north-northwest of the capital, Bishkek.
- **Osh Airport** is an airport serving Osh, the capital of Osh Region of Kyrgyzstan. In 2016, 1.2M passengers passed through the airport, an increase of 33% over the previous years.
- **Issyk-Kul International Airport** is an international airport near Tamchy, a village in Issyk-Kul District of Issyk-Kul Region of Kyrgyzstan.

Traveling around Kyrgyzstan

By plane

- From Bishkek, travelers have the option to reach the Southern cities of Osh, Jalalabad, and Batken by airplane, with the journey typically lasting about an hour. Opting for a window seat offers passengers the opportunity to admire the majestic mountains of Kyrgyzstan from above. Despite the brevity of the flight, it provides a remarkable experience as it ascends over the peaks. Two local carriers, Air Manas (airmanas.com) and Tez Jet (<https://flytezjet.com>), operate flights to the Southern regions. While these airlines may not boast top safety ratings, flying remains a significantly time-saving option compared to the lengthy 12-hour car journey from Bishkek to Osh.

By train

- The railway system in Kyrgyzstan is separated into two segments, north and south, which are not linked. In the northern part, the track stretches from Bishkek to Balykchy alongside Lake Issyk-Kul, where it links up with the extensive rail network of Kazakhstan. On the southern side, it connects Andijon in Uzbekistan with Osh and Jalal-Abad in Kyrgyzstan, although there is currently no operational service in this area.

By road

- Kyrgyzstan boasts a well-established transportation system, with right-hand driving (steering wheel on the left). Buses and taxis are considered the most convenient ways of travel for getting around the country.
- **Inter-city bus service:** The bus fleet of Bishkek was updated in 2009 and today is represented by quite comfortable buses.
- Bishkek (Western Bus Station, Shymkent 1, Bishkek)
- Cholpon Ata (Long Distance Bus Station, 96 Sovetskaya Street)
- Karakol (Main Bus Station, Przhevalskiy Street 149, Karakol)
- Osh (New Bus Station: Outside the city; Southeast corner of Lenin Av and Osmonova Street; Old Bus Station: City center; A373 and Ak-Burinskaya Street)



Taxis:

Taxis operate in all cities and towns of Kyrgyzstan. Tariffs are initially very low. There are private and corporate taxis. It is recommended to call a corporate taxi, and not a private trader (more comfortable and safer).

(<https://kyrgyzstan-tourism.com/travel>)

- **Yandex Go: Taxi Food Delivery** is an app to request rides, order food from restaurants or send items across town.

Instructions:

To begin, download and install the Yandex Taxi app. During installation, grant permission for location access. Next, choose your preferred car class and specify your preferred payment method when prompted. Then, input your destination. Review all details carefully, including trip cost and estimated travel time displayed below. Finally, tap the button to request a taxi.

Driving in Kyrgyzstan:

- Vehicles adhere to right-hand driving rules.
- It is mandatory to carry your valid personal identification document.
- Inside towns and villages, speed limit is 60 km/h. Between villages, 90 km/h is the maximum speed, and in front of schools, it drops to 40km/h.
- Since February 2016, having car insurance is mandatory in Kyrgyzstan.
- It is not permitted to drive a vehicle while inebriated with alcohol.
- Foreigner must have an International driving permit (IDP), often known as a global driving paper, your passport, and a local driving license in order to drive legally in that country. This is one of the crucial driving laws in Kyrgyzstan that you should be aware of and abide by.

Carrying ID

- It's essential to have either your passport with you or a notarized copy of it at all times. Failure to provide identification upon request by the police can result in arrest.

Where to stay

- In Kyrgyzstan, you'll easily find accommodation options suitable for your budget. You can choose between luxurious hotels and small family guest houses.
- Luxurious hotels and resorts are primarily located in Bishkek and Osh, the country's largest cities, as well as near Issyk Kul Lake, particularly in Cholpon-Ata.



- For more budget-friendly options, there are affordable guest houses scattered throughout the small villages you'll explore during your trip. Staying in these welcoming homestays not only provides a chance to interact with fellow travelers but also offers an opportunity to immerse yourself in the local culture through interactions with your hosts.

What to eat and to drink

- Kyrgyzstan is famous for its meat. Kyrgyz people have a strong affinity for meat, including mutton, beef, and horse meat. Wherever you go you can find buffets and cafes, where traditional dishes are served: pilaf, lagman, beshbarmak, boorsok, kuurdak, oromo, dimlama, manty etc. reflecting the rich culinary heritage of the region.
- Kyrgyz dairy offerings include kaimak (cream), sary mai (clarified butter), airan (sour yogurt), and kurut (small pressed and dry salty cheese from sour yogurt), all exclusively prepared from boiled milk. Koumiss, fermented mare's milk available mainly in summer, is notable for its refreshing taste and purported medicinal benefits, often consumed for its therapeutic properties.

Shopping

Kyrgyzstan has a lot of supermarket chains and shopping malls offering a wide range of products including clothing, groceries, cosmetics, and various other essentials, catering to diverse needs. In Bishkek, Osh and Alamedin bazaars are renowned for their offerings of food and handicrafts. Along Chui and Manas avenues, visitors can explore numerous souvenir craft shops and galleries where traditional Kyrgyz products, including paintings, are available for purchase.

Health care

Kyrgyzstan operates a compulsory health insurance system, offering a specific set of publicly covered services known as the State-Guaranteed Benefits Programme (SGBP). Nearly 70% of the nation's 6.6 million inhabitants are enrolled in this health insurance scheme, with many services requiring additional co-payments.

It is recommended that individuals bring along their own medical supplies and medications to address any chronic conditions, as well as for managing minor illnesses and injuries. In the event of significant illness or injuries, standard procedure involves seeking emergency care at local facilities and arranging for medical evacuation at the earliest opportunity.



Education system

- Education in Kyrgyzstan is compulsory for 9 years (age: 7-15 y.). After 4 years of primary school and 5 years of secondary school, the system offers 2 years of senior general school, secondary specialized school or vocational school.
- Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for education in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Government structure

- The Kyrgyz Republic is a sovereign, democratic, legal, secular, unitary, and social state, as per the June 27, 2010 constitution. The type of government is not specified in the constitution.
- Kyrgyzstan's presidential system of government has been formally in place since 2021.
- Sadyr Nurgaliev is a Kyrgyz politician who is currently serving as the president of Kyrgyzstan since 28 January 2021.
- The President is the head of state and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He heads the Security Council, personifies the unity of the people and state power, and leads foreign and personnel policy.

Exchange rates

- Som (Kyrgyz som) is the monetary unit of Kyrgyzstan. 1 som is equal to 100 tyiyns. The ISO 4217 alphabetic code is **KGS**, the numeric code is **417**, the official symbol is **₸**.
- Bills come in denominations of 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000 и 5000 **₸**. And coins have a value of 1, 3, 5, 10 som as well as 1, 10, 50 tyiyns.
- Som is currently valued at (April 20, 2024):
1,00 EUROS= 94,99 **₸**
1,00 \$US = 89,02 **₸**
- The US Dollar is the most preferred currency in Kyrgyzstan.
- Currency exchange won't pose any issues for rubles and euros as well. Obtaining Kazakh tenge, British pounds, and Chinese yuan should also pose no difficulty.
- Bishkek is abundantly equipped with ATMs, known as "Bankomat" in Russian, with some dispensing US dollars (very limited since Ukraine war). In towns outside the capital, ATMs are now prevalent and easily accessible.
- Most banks and hotels widely acknowledge Visa and MasterCard. While some shops may accommodate card payments, many still prefer cash. In smaller towns and rural areas, transactions primarily rely on Kyrgyz soms, with cash being the predominant mode of payment.



Eurasia union

- On April 12, 2011, The Kyrgyz Republic made a statement about its willingness to begin the process of joining the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.
- In this regard, Decision No. 558 of the EurAsEC Interstate Council 'On the Accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Customs Union within the EurAsEC' dated May 19, 2011, instructed the Secretariats of the EurAsEC Integration Committee and the CU Commission to study this issue and prepare the relevant proposals. The final version of the draft road map was fully agreed upon at the 10th meeting of the Working Group held in Moscow on May 12, 2014.
- The Treaty on the Accession entered into force on August 12, 2015. The Kyrgyz Republic became the fifth member of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Entry conditions to Kyrgyzstan & Visas

- Travelers visiting Kyrgyzstan are required to obtain an e-Visa, except for citizens of visa-exempt countries of those eligible for a visa on arrival.
- The Kyrgyz Republic offers the following categories and types of visas:
 - Diplomatic (type D);
 - Service (type O);
 - Investment (type INV);
 - Business (types B1, B2);
 - Labor (types W1, W2);
 - Training (type S);
 - Tourist (type TS);
 - Private (types P1, P2, P3);
 - Religious (type R);
 - Transit (type TR). (<http://www.kgembassy.tj/page-47.html>)

Countries whose nationals are exempt from the entry visa to Kyrgyzstan

- Citizens of certain countries and territories enjoy visa-free entry into Kyrgyzstan for varying durations:
 - For an indefinite period: Azerbaijan, Cuba, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, North Korea, and Tajikistan.
 - For up to 90 days within any 180-day period: Armenia, Belarus, Mongolia, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.
 - For up to 60 days within any 120-day period: European Union member states, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Vatican City, and Vietnam.
 - For up to 30 days: Hong Kong, Macao, Malaysia, Maldives.

For more information please consult the following link:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visa_policy_of_Kyrgyzstan

Electrical circuitry

In Kyrgyzstan, power outlets adhere to the C and F standards, which are commonly used in Europe. The voltage is also consistent at 220 V, with a frequency of 50 Hz.





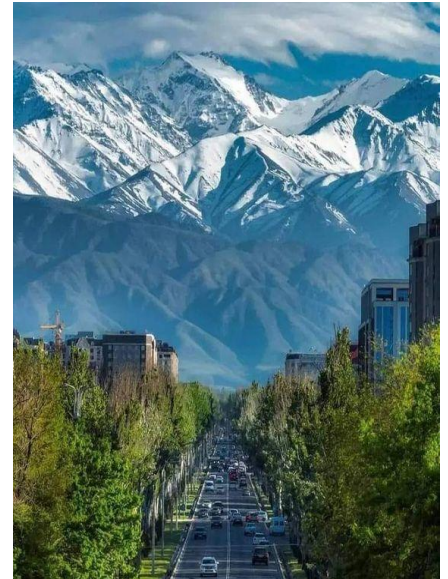
Telephone and internet

- The international telephone country code assigned to Kyrgyzstan is +996.
- Upon arrival, acquiring a SIM card for your phone is a straightforward process, provided that your phone is unlocked for use with different carriers.
- You have the option to purchase a SIM card either at the airport or at any mall in Bishkek.
- In main cities, such as Bishkek, Osh, and Jalalabad, the Internet connection is almost flawless. However, in remote areas, internet speed might be slow or unavailable.
- eSIM can be obtained prior to the arrival (O, Beeline, MegaCom)
 - How to activate eSIM?**
 - Enter the "Settings" of the device;
 - Select the "Cellular" or "Mobile Data" section;
 - Click "Add cellular plan";
 - Scan the QR code with your device.

Kyrgyzstan's main cities that deserve to be visited during your visit to Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek

Bishkek, formerly known as Pishpek and Frunze, stands as the capital and largest city of Kyrgyzstan. It also serves as the administrative center of the Chuy Region, though the city itself operates as a separate administrative unit. Positioned close to the Kazakhstan border, Bishkek is home to a population of approximately 1,074,075 residents as of 2021. As the primary urban center in Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek holds the distinction of being the country's sole metropolis, with around 17% of the nation's populace residing within its metropolitan area.



Osh

Osh, known as "the capital of the south," stands as the second-largest city in Kyrgyzstan, situated in the Fergana Valley in the southern part of the country. With a rich history dating back over 3,000 years, it holds the title of the oldest city in Kyrgyzstan, according to UNESCO estimates. Since 1939, Osh has functioned as the administrative center of the Osh Region. In 2021, it boasted a diverse population of 322,164 individuals, including Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Koreans, and various other ethnic groups.

Osh boasts a significant outdoor activity market that has been operating continuously for 2,000 years, serving as a prominent trading center along the historic Silk Road. The city's industrial sector, developed during the Soviet era, experienced a significant decline following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and has only begun to show signs of revival



Jalal-Abad

Jalal-Abad serves as both the administrative and economic center of the Jalal-Abad Region in southwestern Kyrgyzstan. Covering an area of 88 square kilometers (34 sq mi), it had a population of 123,239 residents in 2021. Positioned at the northeastern edge of the Fergana Valley, it lies along the Kögart River valley, nestled in the foothills of the Babash Ata mountains and in close proximity to the border with Uzbekistan.

