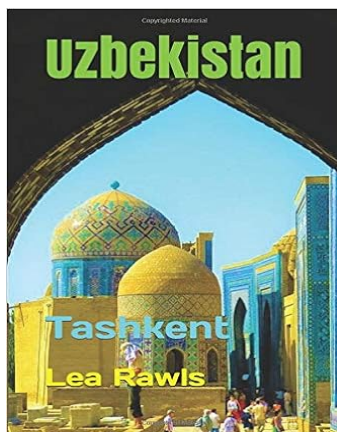


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Ausgabe **KINDLE**

Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked sovereign state in Central Asia. It is a secular, unitary constitutional republic, comprising 12 provinces, one autonomous republic, and a capital city. Uzbekistan is bordered by five landlocked countries: Kazakhstan to the north; Kyrgyzstan to the northeast; Tajikistan to the southeast; Afghanistan to the south; and Turkmenistan to the southwest.

What is now Uzbekistan was in ancient times part of the Iranian-speaking region of Transoxiana. Uzbekistan has a diverse cultural heritage due to its storied history and strategic location. Its major official language is Uzbek, a Turkic language written in the Latin alphabet and spoken natively by approximately 85% of the population. Russian has widespread use as a governmental language; it is the most widely taught second language. Uzbeks constitute 81% of the population, followed by Russians (5.4%), Tajiks (4.0%), Kazakhs (3.0%), and others (6.5%). Muslims constitute 79% of the population while 5% of the population follow Russian Orthodox Christianity, and 16% of the population follow other religions or are non-religious. A majority of Uzbeks are non-denominational Muslims.

Following the death of Islam Karimov in 2016, the second president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, started a new course, which was described as a Quiet Revolution and Revolution from Above. He stated he intended to abolish cotton slavery, systematic use of child labour, exit visas, to introduce a tax

reform, create four new free economic zones, as well as
amnestied some political prisoners. The relations with
neighboring countries of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and
Afghanistan drastically improved. However, the Amnesty
International report on human rights in the country for
2017/2018 described continued repressive measures,
including forced labour in cotton harvesting, and restrictions
on movements of 'freed' prisoners.

The Uzbek economy is in a gradual transition to the market
economy, with foreign trade policy being based on import
substitution. In September 2017, the country's currency
became fully convertible in the market rates. Uzbekistan is a
major producer and exporter of cotton. The country also
operates the largest open-pit gold mine in the world. With
the gigantic power-generation facilities of the Soviet era and
an ample supply of natural gas, Uzbekistan has become the
largest electricity producer in Central Asia. Renewable
energy constitutes more than 23% of the country's energy
sector, with hydroelectricity and solar energy having 21.4%
and 2% respectively.