TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

Tajikistan

Country name	Tajikistan
State title	Republic of Tajikistan
Name of citizen	Tajik
Official language	Tajik (tgk)[1]
Country name in official language	Tojikiston (Тоҷикистон)
State title in official language	Jumhurii Tojikiston (Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон)
Script	Tajik Cyrillic
Romanization System	[BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Tajik 1994](#)
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	TJ/TJK
Capital	Dushanbe (Душанбе)

Introduction

Tajikistan is a mountainous country in Central Asia. It shares a land border with Afghanistan to the south, Uzbekistan to the west, Kyrgyzstan to the north, and China to the east. In September 1991, Tajikistan gained independence from the Soviet Union. There is a distinct geographical imbalance in the population, owing to the topography of the country, with fewer than 500,000 people (6.5% of the total population) inhabiting the mountainous eastern half of Tajikistan. Its population of approximately 8.9 million persons comprises 84% ethnic Tajiks, 14% Uzbeks, with Russian, Kyrgyz, and other ethnic groups making up the remainder.[2] Ethnic Tajiks also live in the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan[3] and Uzbekistan.

Geographical names policy

Geographical names in Tajikistan are found written in Tajik Cyrillic, reflecting the country's official language and script. Where possible, names should be taken from official Tajik sources and romanized using the [BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Tajik](#). Russian language names and spellings used during Soviet times may be encountered on older sources but should no longer be used. Since Tajikistan's independence, many toponyms have been changed or had their spelling modified, a trend that continues today (see also section on Language below).

It should also be noted that non-standard Roman-script forms may be found which differ from those arising from the application of the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Tajik. Perso-Arabic script names may also be encountered, either on older sources or as part of a somewhat limited movement promoting the writing of Tajik in this script.

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[1] ISO 639 codes are given for the languages mentioned in this Factfile.
[2] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tajikistan/
[3] Ethnic Tajiks in Afghanistan speak Dari (Afghan Persian) rather than Tajik.

Language

Tajik (tgk)[4] is the official language of Tajikistan. In Tajikistan, Tajik is written in the Tajik Cyrillic alphabet[5]. This alphabet is used for official written purposes and now contains 35 letters, including six characters not present in the Russian alphabet: Ғ, Ӣ, Қ, Ӯ, Ҳ, and Ҷ. Orthographic reform in 1998 abolished the previously-used characters Ц, Щ, Ь and Ы. The form of some Cyrillic characters differs in italics/handwriting from the printed form (see BGN/PCGN Romanization System for further details).

Tajik is an Indo-Iranian language. There are four main dialects spoken in the country which all correspond to their geographical region (northern, central, southern, and south-eastern). Tajik forms part of the Persian group of languages, along with Western Persian (Farsi) (fas), spoken in Iran, and Dari (Afghan Persian) (prs), both of which are written in Perso-Arabic script. Despite its different alphabet, Tajik is very similar to these other two languages. Many of the areas in which it differs are due to the influence of the Russian language and Soviet terminology. For example, Tajik contains many loanwords from Russian.

The 1994 Tajikistan Constitution states that Russian (rus) is the language of inter-ethnic communication and as such it remains an important language of administration and business. The Constitution also supports the freedom of all national and ethnic groups residing in the country to use their native language. In addition to Tajik, there are a dozen or so such ethnic groups in Tajikistan, including Russians, Ukrainians (both mainly in the towns), Kirghiz (mainly around the eastern town of Murghob) and Uzbeks. Uzbek (uzb) and Kyrgyz (kir)[6] are the natural languages of the Uzbek and Kirghiz ethnic minorities, both of which belong to the Turkic group of languages. The Pamiri peoples of the mountainous east are related to the Tajiks and speak various languages which, although mainly of the Persian family, differ substantially from Tajik, and do not have a standard written form.

Since independence, there have been various government-promoted movements to 'Tajikize' place names, street names, personal names and vocabulary in Tajikistan. Russian, Soviet, Arabic and Turkic influences on the country's language and names have all been targeted in an attempt to define and formulate a national identity and culture. The political nature of issues related to the Tajik language mean that further name changes are likely.[7] There are regular reports of name changes in Tajikistan, for which it is sometimes difficult to find official confirmation[8].

The *izofat* is a grammatical element of Tajik, which is relevant to geographical names. Like the Persian *ezafeh*, Tajik *izofat* links words (such as the generic and specific elements of geographical names) in a possessive construction. In Tajik, the *izofat* involves the addition of the Cyrillic character и (romanized as 'i') to the end of the first word in the construction (usually the generic). In Tajik script and Romanization this character is written joined onto the end of the word it modifies. Examples can be seen in the state title Ҷумхури**и** Тоҷикистон (Jumhuri**i** Tojikiston = Republic of Tajikistan) and in the names of administrative divisions, e.g. Вилоят**и** Суғд (Viloyat**i** Sughd = Province of Sughd).

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[4] Sometimes called Tajiki.
[5] Imposed by the Soviet Government in 1940.
[6] BGN and PCGN have agreed on the term Kyrgyz for the language and Kirghiz for the people/ethnicity. The spellings Kirgiz and Kyrghyz may also be encountered.
[7] For further details see PCGN's 31st BGN/PCGN Conference paper *'Tajikization' of Names*.
[8] https://ittiloot.com/en/all/main-page/36057-two-peaks-renamed-in-the-pamirs.html

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings[9]):

The BGN/PCGN Romanization system for Tajik contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script[10]:

Upper case character	Unicode encoding	Lower case character	Unicode encoding
Í	00CD	í	00ED
Ŭ	016C	ŭ	016D
È	00C8	è	00E8

Boundaries

Tajikistan has two exclaves within Kyrgyzstan: Vorukh (39° 51′ 12″ N, 70° 34′ 37″ E) and Lolazor at 40° 04′ 09″ N, 69° 32′ 46″ E (formerly known as Kayragach. The new name means 'place abundant in tulips' in Tajik); and one exclave surrounded by Uzbekistan: Sarvan (40° 55′ 23″ N, 70° 39′ 36″ E), also known as Sarvak.

Administrative structure

At first-order administrative (ADM1) level, Tajikistan comprises four entities (details of which are provided below), of varying status, which can be summarised as follows:
- Two Provinces (*Viloyat* in Tajik): Sughd & Khatlon
- One Autonomous Province (*Viloyati Mukhtor* in Tajik): Kŭhistoni Badakhshon
- One Capital Territory: Dushanbe - Dushanbe is the capital of Tajikistan, and is also separately and autonomously administered by the Government at ADM1 level.

These four entities are sub-divided into *nohiya* (district) and *shahr* (town) at second-order (ADM2) level[11]. The numbers of ADM2s listed below are best estimates as sources differ.

Sughd - 40° 00' 00" N 069° 00' 00" E

Name in Tajik Cyrillic	Суғд
Long form name	Viloyati Sughd
Long form name in Tajik Cyrillic	Вилояти Суғд
Variant names	Leninobod[12]; Leninabad; Leninobad; Sogd; Sogdiyskaya Oblast'
ISO 3166-2 code	TJ-SU
Administrative centre	Khujand (40° 16' 57" N 069° 37' 20" E)
Variant names of centre	Leninobod, Leninobad; Leninabad; Khojand; Khodjend; Hodjent; Khodzhent; Khudzhand: Khŭjand; Khojent
Centre in Tajik Cyrillic	Хуҷанд
ADM2s	Consists of 11 districts & 7 cities

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[9] See www.unicode.org

[10] Characters can be manually input into Microsoft word documents by typing in these character codes and then holding down the ALT key and pressing /x/. The code will change to the required character. The letter can be copied and pasted into other programmes if required. Alternatively, the 'Insert – Symbol' command can be used; the code can be entered into the 'Character code' box which will show the corresponding letter. A GeoNames Soft-Copy Keyboard can be downloaded from the NGA website and used to enter the required letter-diacritic combinations for a particular region: http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/gns_services.html.

[11] A map of the ADM2s can be found on the Tajik President's website: www.president.tj

[12] The province and the city were known under the Soviet Union as Leninabad in Russian (Leninobod in Tajik). Viloyati Sughd was known as Viloyati Leninobod until August 2000. The city was renamed Khujand in 1991.

Khatlon - 37° 50' 00" N 069° 00' 00" E

Name in Tajik Cyrillic	Хатлон
Long form name	Viloyati Khatlon
Long form name in Tajik Cyrillic	Вилояти Хатлон
Variant names	Khatlan, Khatlonskaya Oblast'
ISO 3166-2 code	TJ-KT
Administrative centre	Bokhtar (37° 50' 12" N, 068° 46' 39" E)[13]
Variant names of centre	Qŭrghonteppa (Қӯрғонтеппа); Kurgan-Tyube; Qurghān Tyube; Kurgan-Tube
Centre in Tajik Cyrillic	Бохтар
ADM2s	Consists of 20 districts & 3 cities

Kŭhistoni Badakhshon (Gorno-Badakhshan) - 38° 00' 00" N 073° 00' 00" E

Name in Tajik Cyrillic	Кӯҳистони Бадахшон
Long form name	Viloyati Mukhtori Kŭhistoni Badakhshon
Long form name in Tajik Cyrillic	Вилояти Мухтори Кӯҳистони Бадахшон
Variant names	Gorno-Badakhshan; Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO); Kohistani Badakhshan; Gornyy Badakhshan; Kŭhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province; Mountainous Badakhshan; Gorno-Badakhshanksaya Avtonomnaya Oblast'
ISO 3166-2 code	TJ-GB
Administrative centre	Khorugh (37° 29' 23" N 071° 33' 11" E)
Variant names of Centre	Khoroq; Khorogh; Khorog; Xoroq
Centre in Tajik Cyrillic	Хоруғ
ADM2s	Consists of 7 districts & 1 city

Dushanbe - 38° 33' 36" N 068° 46' 26" E

Long form name	Dushanbe
Name in Tajik Cyrillic	Душанбе
ISO 3166-2 code	TJ-DU
Centre	Dushanbe (38° 33' 36" N 068° 46' 26" E)
Centre in Tajik Cyrillic	Душанбе
Variant names of centre and ADM1	Stalinabad[14]; Doshambe; Dyushambe; Djuschambe; Jushambe
ADM2s	Consists of 4 districts

'districts under republic administration'

The remaining portion of Tajikistan, not covered by any of these four first-order administrative divisions, does not constitute a first-order division. Instead, the districts and towns within this region are directly subordinate to the Republic of Tajikistan as a whole and administered from Dushanbe. This area can be described as "districts under republic administration"[15] (nohiyahoi tobei jumhurí - ноҳияҳои тобеи ҷумҳурӣ in Tajik; rayony respublikanskogo podchineniya - районы республиканского подчинения in Russian) and should be labelled as such on cartographic products. In the early 1990s, suggestions were made that this region should become a first-order

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[13] Qŭrghonteppa was renamed Bokhtar in 2018: http://prezident.tj/ru/node/16943

[14] The capital city was known as Stalinabad from 1929 until 1961, when it was renamed Dushanbe.

[15] As this label is not a proper name it should be written in lower case.

division with the name of *Viloyati Qaroteghin* (sometimes spelt Karotegin), named after one of the mountain ranges found there and some unofficial sources reflect this proposal.

districts under republic administration - 39° 00' 00" N 070° 00' 00" E

Long form name	districts under republic administration
Name in Tajik Script	Ноҳияҳои тобеи ҷумҳурӣ
Romanised Tajik	nohiyahoi tobei jumhurí
ISO 3166-2 code	TJ-RA
Variant names	Districts of Republican Subordination (DRA); Region of Republican Subordination (RRP); Karotegin Province; Viloyati Qaroteghin; rayony respublikanskogo podchineniya (районы республиканского подчинения)
Administrative Centre	*Administered from the capital Dushanbe*
Centre in Tajik script	-
Consists of 12 districts and 4 cities	

Other significant locations

* The names marked with an asterisk are classed as international features, consequently the English language conventional name should be used.

PCGN Romanization	Conventional Name[16]	Name in Tajik script	Variant Names	Feature Type	Location
Aghbai Anzob	Anzob Pass	Ағбаи Анзоб	-	Mountain pass	39° 05' 01" N 068° 51' 54" E
Amudaryo	Amu Darya*	Амударё	Oxus River; Daryoi Amu (Дарёи Аму); Omudaryo (Омударё); Amudarya (Амударья)	River	43° 40' 00" N 059° 01' 00" E
Gharm	-	Ғарм	Rasht (Рашт); Garm (Гарм)	Populated place	39° 01' 43" N 070° 22' 28" E
Hisor	-	Ҳисор	Gissar; Khisor	Populated place	38° 31' 30" N 068° 33' 04" E
Istaravshan	-	Истаравшан	Ŭroteppa; Uroteppa; Istrawshan	Populated place	39° 54' 51" N 069° 00' 12" E
Kŭhhoi Fon	Fann Mountains[17]	Кӯҳҳои Фон	Fanskiye Gory; Fan Mountains; Fon tog'lari	Mountain range	39° 10' N 068° 15' E
Kŭhhoi Pomir	Pamir Mountains*	Кӯҳҳои Помир	The Pamirs; Pamiri Mountains; Pomir	Mountain range	38° 00' 00" N 073° 00' 00" E
Kŭli Sarez	-	Кӯли Сарез	Sārez Köl; Sarezskoye ozero (Сарезское озеро); Sarezskoe	Lake	38° 11' 25" N, 072° 43' 23" E
Kŭlob	-	Кӯлоб	Kulab; Kulyab	Populated place	37° 54' 52" N 069° 46' 59" E
Murghob	-	Мурғоб	Murgab; Margab; Murghāb	Populated place	38° 10' 13" N 073° 58' 00" E

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[16] PCGN recommends use of conventional names for international features. For names within Tajikistan, the conventional names can be included in brackets after the Romanized Tajik name on cartographic products, and can be used in English-language texts.

[17] This mountain massif lies in the western portion of the Zeravshan (Zarafshon) Range, to the west of the Anzob Pass which carries the road from Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe to the northerly town of Khujand.

PCGN Romanization	Conventional Name	Name in Tajik script	Variant Names	Feature Type	Location
Obanbori Qayroqqum[18]	-	Обанбори Қайроққум	Kayrakkum; Kairakkum; Qayroqum; Qayraqqum; Kayrakum; Kairakum; Kayrakkumskoye Vodokhranilishche (Кайраккумское водохранилище); Бахри Тоҷик (Tajik Sea)	Reservoir	40° 18' 49" N, 070° 08' 14" E
Panj	Panj River*	Панҷ	Daryā-ye Panj; Pyandzh (Пяндж); Āb-e Panj; Pyanj; Pandj; Ochus River	River	37° 06' 37" N 068° 18' 57" E
Panj	-	Панҷ	Pyandzh; Kirovabad	Populated place	37° 14' 11" N 069° 05' 57" E
Panjakent	-	Панҷакент	Pendshikent; Pendzhakent; Pendzhikent	Populated place	39° 29' 43" N 067° 36' 34" E
Piryakhi Fedchenko	-	Пиряхи Федченко	Khrebet Fedchenko; Lednik Fedchenko (Ледник Федченко)	Glacier	38° 52' 56" N, 072° 14' 54" E
Qarokŭl	-	Қарокӯл	Karakul; Karakul' (Каракуль)	Lake	39° 02' 24" N 073° 23' 30" E
Qullai Abualí Ibni Sino	Ibn Sina Peak	Қуллаи Абуалӣ ибни Сино	Abuali ibn Sina Peak; Pik Abuali ibn Sino (Пик Абуали ибн Сино); Lenin Peak; Pik Lenina (Пик Ленина); Avicenna Peak	Mountain	39° 20′ 33″ N 72° 52′ 39″ E
Qullai Ismoili Somoní	-	Қуллаи Исмоили Сомонӣ	Pik Ismaila Samani (пик Исмаила Самани); Pik Imeni Ismail Samani; Qullai Somoní Qullai Kommunizm; Pik Kommunizma; Pik Stalina; Pik Garmo; Mount Stalin; Samanid's Peak	Mountain	38° 56' 33" N 072° 00' 56" E
Qullai Istiqlol	Independence Peak	Қуллаи Истиқлол	Istiqlol Peak; (Пик Истиклол); Revolution Peak; Qullai Inqilob (Қуллаи Инқилоб)	Mountain	38° 30′ 36″ N 72° 21′ 15″ E
Qullai Ozodi	Freedom Peak	Қуллаи Озодӣ	Pik Ozozdi (Пик Озоди); Qullai Korzhenevskaya (Қуллаи Е. Корженевская); Korjenevskaya Peak; (Пик Е. Корженевская); Korzhenevskoi Peak; Pik Korzhenovskoy (Пик Корженевской); Korzhenevski; Korzhenievsky	Mountain	39° 3′ 27″ N 72° 0′ 30″ E
Shahritus	-	Шаҳритус	Shahrtuz (Шаҳртуз); Shaartuz	Populated place	37° 15' 49" N 068° 08' 19" E

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[18] A proposal to change the name of this reservoir to Бахри Тоҷик (Tajik Sea) was part of a list of name changes put forward by the Tajik president in 2016, but it is not clear that this name change has been widely adopted or officially implemented.

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PCGN Romanization	Conventional Name	Name in Tajik script	Variant Names	Feature Type	Location
Tursunzoda	-	Турсунзода	Tursunzade	Populated place	38° 30' 46" N 068° 13' 54" E
Vodii Farghona	Fergana Valley	водии Фарғона	Fargʻona Vodiysi; Fergana Öröönü; Farghona Wodisi; Fargana	Valley	40° 46' 00" N, 071° 30' 00" E
Zarafshon	Zeravshan	Зарафшон	Заравшан (Zeravshan); Zarafshan	River	39° 22' 57" N, 068° 33' 06" E
Zarafshon	Zeravshan Range*	Зарафшон	Zeravshanskiy Khrebet (Зеравшанский хребет); Qatorkŭhi Zarafshon (қаторкӯҳи Зарафшон); Zarafshan Range	Mountain range	39° 14' 23" N, 069° 07' 21" E

Useful references

- BBC country profile: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1296639.stm
- BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Russian: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807920/ROMANIZATION_OF_RUSSIAN.pdf
- BGN/PCGN Tajik Romanization System: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/816784/ROMANIZATION_OF_TAJIK.pdf
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tajikistan/
- Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tajikistan_2003.pdf?lang=en
- Ethnologue (information on languages): https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TJ
- FCDO Geographical Names & Information: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geographical-names-and-information
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): http://www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui
- *Jumhurii Tojikiston*, 1:750,000 map published by Department of Cartography of the Government of Tajikistan (2002)
- Library of Congress Country Study: https://www.loc.gov/item/97005110/
- Omniglot (Tajik language & script): http://www.omniglot.com/writing/tajik.htm
- PCGN Country Names list: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names
- Statoids (Administrative divisions): http://www.statoids.com
- Tajikistan Agency on Statistics: https://www.stat.tj/en/
- Tajikistan: The Lofty Fastness of the Pamirs: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20140402151900mp_/http://www.pcgn.org.uk/Tajikistan%20-%202001.pdf (Contains a Glossary of Geographical Terms found in Tajikistan).
- Unicode www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: https://geonames.nga.mil/namesgaz/