

AZERBAIJAN

Country name in English (PCGN recommended name)	Azerbaijan
Country name in Azerbaijani	Azərbaycan
State title in English (PCGN recommended name)	Republic of Azerbaijan
State title in Azerbaijani	Azərbaycan Respublikası
Official language	Azerbaijani (Azeri) (aze) ¹
Script	Roman; Cyrillic (until 1991)
Romanization System	BGN/PCGN Table of Correspondences 1993 Agreement ²
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	AZ/AZE
Capital	Bakı (Baku)
Population	9.89 million ³

Introduction

Azerbaijan is the largest country in Transcaucasia⁴ (see map on next page). The exclave of Naxçıvan is located to the southwest of Azerbaijan, bordering Armenia, Iran and Turkey. The mountainous region of Nagornyy Karabakh in western Azerbaijan is a breakaway “republic” of separatist Armenians⁵, internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan. From 1920, until September 1991, Azerbaijan was one of the fifteen Soviet republics incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, ethnic tensions between the two former Soviet Socialist Republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia led to conflict over / in Nagornyy Karabakh. Since 1994, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic held control of most of the Nagornyy Karabakh area and Armenian forces occupied further areas of Azerbaijan beyond the Nagornyy Karabakh area. The resumption of fighting in 2020 ended when a ceasefire was agreed in November 2020, and control of the area occupied by the Armenian forces, along with small parts of the Nagornyy Karabakh area was returned to Azerbaijan.

Geographical names policy

Geographical names should be taken as found on official Azerbaijani Roman-script sources. The main sources for geographical names are topographic maps published by the State

¹ ISO 639-3 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Fact File.

² The BGN/PCGN Table of Correspondences may be used when Azerbaijani Roman-alphabet spellings are not available, to convert Azerbaijani Cyrillic spellings.

³ The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, January 2018.

⁴ Also known as Southern Caucasia, it is a region to the south of the Caucasus mountains, situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea consisting of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

⁵ The term used to describe the breakaway “republic” is Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

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Committee of Land and Cartography of Azerbaijan Republic⁶. Although there might be Armenian names for geographical places in Nagornyy Karabakh, PCGN recommends using the names as found on official Azerbaijani sources. If any sources are found written in Azerbaijani Cyrillic, the BGN/PCGN Table of Correspondences can be applied to establish the appropriate Roman-script form.

Azerbaijan



Map of Azerbaijan and surrounding countries, including enclaves, exclaves and the region of Nagornyy Karabakh (showing the boundary of the former Soviet-established Nagorno-Karabakhskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast')

Language

Azerbaijani (Azeri) is the official language of Azerbaijan⁷. Azerbaijani was written in the Perso-Arabic script until 1929 when a Roman alphabet was introduced. In 1939 a Cyrillic script was introduced (imposed) under Soviet rule. On independence in 1991, the Azerbaijani government adopted the current Roman alphabet (a slightly different version to that of 1929-1939) and today Azerbaijani is written exclusively in Roman script. Azerbaijani is closely related to Turkish (including the alphabet) and there is a degree of mutual intelligibility between them. It is also an official language in the Republic of Dagestan in Russia. Armenian (arm/hye) is widely spoken in some parts of the Nagornyy Karabakh region.

⁶ http://www.azerbaijan.az/StatePower/CommitteeConcern/committeeConcern_e.html

⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20070928103752/www.un-az.org/undp/doc/constitution.htm>

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Inventory of Azerbaijani characters (and their Unicode encodings⁸):

In addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script, the Azerbaijani alphabet contains the following letter-diacritic combinations and special letters:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Ə ⁹	018F	ə	0259
Ğ	011E	ğ	011F
İ	0130	ı	0131
Ş	015E	ş	015F
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
Ö	00D6	ö	00F6

Territorial and toponymic issues

Nagornyy Karabakh

The region of Nagornyy Karabakh in western Azerbaijan, is a predominantly Armenian-populated breakaway “republic”, internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan. The Azeri translation is Dağlıq Qarabağ, the Armenian translation is Lerrnayin Gharabagh¹⁰. The name Nagornyy Karabakh refers to the area covered by the former Soviet-established Nagorno-Karabakhskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast¹¹, and it is this name that is used as the basis for the name recommended for use on HMG products: **Nagornyy Karabakh**. Before the 2020 ceasefire, the area under *de facto* control of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (known as Artsakh in Armenian), included adjacent ethnic Armenian territory in Azerbaijan, and extended beyond the Nagornyy Karabakh region. Following the 2020 ceasefire, the area under *de facto* control of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is slightly smaller than the region of Nagornyy Karabakh.

The centre of Nagornyy Karabakh is Xankəndi, although the Armenian name is Stepanakert¹². Though there might be Armenian names for geographical features in Nagornyy Karabakh, it is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, therefore PCGN recommends using the names as found on official Azerbaijani sources.

Naxçıvan

Naxçıvan Muxtar Respublikası (Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic)¹³ is an exclave of Azerbaijan bordering Armenia, Iran and Turkey. It is a separate autonomous area of

⁸ See www.unicode.org

⁹ The special letter Ə ə, known as *schwa*, should be used when writing in the Roman alphabet. However, if it cannot be reproduced, the letter Ä, ä may be substituted for it. The *schwa* is also sometimes unofficially substituted with plain ‘a’ or ‘e’.

¹⁰ All the names in the various languages translate to “mountainous Karabakh” or “mountainous Black garden”.

¹¹ It does not refer to the area beyond the former Soviet oblast that was either previously claimed by, or under *de facto* control of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic between 1994 and 2020.

¹² Reference can be included to the Armenian name Stepanakert (as widely used in the media) if considered necessary. It may be added in brackets after Xankəndi. Note that the letter ‘x’ is sometimes replaced with the letters ‘kh’ e.g. the unofficial spelling of Khankendi for Xankəndi

¹³ Naxçıvan is the Azerbaijani spelling. It may be seen in English sources in a variety of ways including: Nakhichevan, Nakhchivan, Nakhichevan.

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Azerbaijan governed by its own legislature, inhabited mostly by ethnic Azerbaijanis. Its component districts are of an equivalent status to those in the rest of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's Law on the Status of Municipalities refers to units within Naxçıvan as well as the rest of the country¹⁴, and its law listing the names of the units¹⁵ includes them all at the same level. The Azerbaijan Constitution describes Naxçıvan legislative, judicial and executive responsibilities, but notes in Article 141 (in its English translation) on local executive power:

In Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic heads of local executive power bodies are appointed by the President of the Azerbaijan Republic on recommendation of the Chairman of Ali Majlis of Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic.

Exclaves

Kərki (renamed Tigranashen by the Armenian government) is an exclave of Naxçıvan, outside of its northern border, that it is controlled by Armenia.

Yuxarı Əskipara (Armenian: Verin Voskepar) is an exclave of Azerbaijan within Armenia. The village has been destroyed, and is administered by Armenia.

Sofulu and **Barxudarlı** are exclaves of Azerbaijan within Armenia. They are mostly inhabited by Armenians and administered by Armenia.

Artsvashen is an exclave of Armenia which has been occupied by Azerbaijan since 1992. The Azerbaijani name is Başkənd. Mostly populated by Azeris.

There are two small farms south of Yaradullu (in northwest Azerbaijan). It is assumed that Armenia controls them and that Azerbaijan claims them.

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Approved Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Azerbaijan: Araz (Aras) ¹⁶ Turkey: Aras Iran: Rūd-e Aras (Aras) Armenia: Arak's (Aras)	Araks, Arax, Erez	40° 01'N, 048° 27'E	River
Talish Mountains	Talish	38° 42'N, 048° 19'E	Mountains
Caucasus	Kovkas (Armenian) Qafqaz (Azerbaijani)	42° 00'N, 045° 00'E	Region
Caucasus	Böyük Qafqaz (Azerbaijani)	43° 20'N, 042° 26'E	Mountains
Caspian Sea ¹⁷		42° 00'N, 050° 00'E	Sea
Kura River ¹⁸	Kür (Azerbaijani) Kura (Turkish)	39° 22'N, 049° 21'E	River
Mingəçevir su anbarı	Mingachevir reservoir	40° 47'N, 047° 02'E	Reservoir

¹⁴ This law is available in English at [http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2009/CDL\(2009\)163-e.pdf](http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2009/CDL(2009)163-e.pdf)

¹⁵ http://localdemocracy.az/upload/files/Erazi_ve_torpaqlar.doc; this list does not include those in the Nagornyy Karabakh area.

¹⁶ Araz river flows along the between Turkey and the Naxçıvan area of Azerbaijan and then through Azerbaijan to the Kura river.

¹⁷ The world's largest inland body of water.

¹⁸ Starting in Turkey, flows through Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea.

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LIST OF FIRST-ORDER ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS IN AZERBAIJAN

AS OF JANUARY 2021

Azerbaijan officially comprises 66 districts (*rayon*¹⁹) and 11 municipalities (*şəhər*²⁰) at the first-order administrative level (ADM1). However, some of these districts cover the area of Nagorny Karabakh, part of which is a *de facto* breakaway “republic”. Districts which fall completely or partially into the area claimed by the self-proclaimed republic are marked with “NK” below. A further 7 districts and one municipality (city) fall into Naxçıvan - shown *in green type and italics (numbers 8, 16, 28, 37, 40, 51, 52, 59)*.

	Name	Latitude	Longitude	Official centre	ISO 3166-2 code
1.	Abşeron Rayonu	40° 25' 00" N	049° 20' 00" E	Xırdalan	AZ-ABS
2.	Ağcabədi Rayonu	40° 00' 00" N	047° 25' 00" E	Ağcabədi	AZ-AGC
3.	Ağdam Rayonu	40° 00' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	Ağdam	AZ-AGM
4.	Ağdaş Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	047° 25' 00" E	Ağdaş	AZ-AGS
5.	Ağstafa Rayonu	41° 15' 00" N	045° 30' 00" E	Ağstafa	AZ-AGA
6.	Ağsu Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	048° 20' 00" E	Ağsu	AZ-AGU
7.	Astara Rayonu	38° 30' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	Astara	AZ-AST
8.	<i>Babək Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 09' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 22' 00" E</i>	<i>Babək</i>	<i>AZ-BAB</i>
9.	Bakı Şəhəri	40° 18' 00" N	049° 43' 00" E	Bakı	AZ-BA
10.	Balakən Rayonu	41° 45' 00" N	046° 25' 00" E	Balakən	AZ-BAL
11.	Bərdə Rayonu	40° 20' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	Bərdə	AZ-BAR
12.	Beyləqan Rayonu	39° 45' 00" N	047° 40' 00" E	Beyləqan	AZ-BEY
13.	Biləsuvar Rayonu	39° 30' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	Biləsuvar	AZ-BIL
14.	Cəbrayıl Rayonu	39° 20' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	Cəbrayıl	AZ-CAB
15.	Cəlilabad Rayonu	39° 15' 00" N	048° 30' 00" E	Cəlilabad	AZ-CAL
16.	<i>Culfa Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 10' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 40' 00" E</i>	<i>Culfa</i>	<i>AZ-CUL</i>
17.	Daşkəsən Rayonu	40° 25' 00" N	046° 00' 00" E	Daşkəsən	AZ-DAS
18.	Füzuli Rayonu	39° 35' 00" N	047° 20' 00" E	Füzuli	AZ-FUZ
19.	Gədəbəy Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	045° 40' 00" E	Gədəbəy	AZ-GAD
20.	Gəncə Şəhəri	40° 39' 00" N	046° 21' 00" E	Gəncə	AZ-GA
21.	Goranboy Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	Goranboy	AZ-GOR
22.	Göyçay Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	047° 50' 00" E	Göyçay	AZ-GOY
23.	Göygöl Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	046° 20' 00" E	Göygöl	AZ-GYG
24.	Hacıqabul Rayonu	40° 05' 00" N	048° 55' 00" E	Hacıqabul ²¹	AZ-HAC
25.	İmişli Rayonu	39° 50' 00" N	048° 05' 00" E	İmişli	AZ-IMI
26.	İsmayıllı Rayonu	40° 50' 00" N	048° 10' 00" E	İsmayıllı	AZ-ISM
27.	Kəlbəcər Rayonu	40° 05' 00" N	046° 10' 00" E	Kəlbəcər	NK AZ-KAL
28.	<i>Kəngərli Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 25' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 15' 00" E</i>	<i>Qıvraq</i>	<i>AZ-KAN</i>
29.	Kürdəmir Rayonu	40° 15' 00" N	048° 10' 00" E	Kürdəmir	AZ-KUR

¹⁹ This is the singular form; the plural would be *rayonlar*.

²⁰ This is the singular form; the plural would be *şəhərlər*.

²¹ Sometimes seen as Qazıməmməd.

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30.	Laçın Rayonu	39° 40' 00" N	046° 25' 00" E	Laçın		AZ-LAC
31.	Lənkəran Rayonu	38° 55' 00" N	048° 55' 00" E	Lənkəran		AZ-LAN
32.	Lənkəran Şəhəri	38° 44' 00" N	048° 50' 00" E	Lənkəran		AZ-LA
33.	Lerik Rayonu	38° 45' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	Lerik		AZ-LER
34.	Masallı Rayonu	39° 00' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	Masallı		AZ-MAS
35.	Mingəçevir Şəhəri	40° 46' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	Mingəçevir		AZ-MI
36.	Naftalan Şəhəri	40° 29' 00" N	046° 43' 00" E	Naftalan		AZ-NA
37.	<i>Naxçıvan Şəhəri</i>	<i>39° 20' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 30' 00" E</i>	<i>Naxçıvan</i>		<i>AZ-NX</i>
38.	Neftçala Rayonu	39° 20' 00" N	049° 00' 00" E	Neftçala		AZ-NEF
39.	Oğuz Rayonu	41° 05' 00" N	047° 30' 00" E	Oğuz		AZ-OGU
40.	<i>Ordubad Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 05' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 55' 00" E</i>	<i>Ordubad</i>		<i>AZ-ORD</i>
41.	Qəbələ Rayonu	40° 55' 00" N	047° 50' 00" E	Qəbələ		AZ-QAB
42.	Qax Rayonu	41° 20' 00" N	046° 45' 00" E	Qax		AZ-QAX
43.	Qazax Rayonu	41° 10' 00" N	045° 10' 00" E	Qazax		AZ-QAZ
44.	Qobustan Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	049° 00' 00" E	Qobustan		AZ-QOB
45.	Quba Rayonu	41° 10' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	Quba		AZ-QBA
46.	Qubadlı Rayonu	39° 20' 00" N	046° 35' 00" E	Qubadlı		AZ-QBI
47.	Qusar Rayonu	41° 25' 00" N	048° 15' 00" E	Qusar		AZ-QUS
48.	Saatlı Rayonu	39° 50' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	Saatlı		AZ-SAT
49.	Sabirabad Rayonu	39° 55' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	Sabirabad		AZ-SAB
50.	Şabran Rayonu	41° 10' 00" N	048° 55' 00" E	Şabran		AZ-SBN
51.	<i>Sədərək Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 42' 00" N</i>	<i>044° 52' 00" E</i>	<i>Heydərabad</i>		<i>AZ-SAD</i>
52.	<i>Şahbuz Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 25' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 35' 00" E</i>	<i>Şahbuz</i>		<i>AZ-SAH</i>
53.	Şəki Rayonu	41° 05' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	Şəki		AZ-SAK
54.	Şəki Şəhəri	41° 11' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	Şəki		AZ-SA
55.	Salyan Rayonu	39° 40' 00" N	049° 00' 00" E	Salyan		AZ-SAL
56.	Şamaxı Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	Şamaxı		AZ-SMI
57.	Şəmkir Rayonu	40° 50' 00" N	046° 05' 00" E	Şəmkir		AZ-SKR
58.	Samux Rayonu	40° 55' 00" N	046° 25' 00" E	Samux		AZ-SMX
59.	<i>Şərur Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 30' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 05' 00" E</i>	<i>Şərur</i>		<i>AZ-SAR</i>
60.	Şirvan Şəhəri	39° 55' 00" N	048° 56' 00" E	Şirvan		AZ-SR
61.	Siyəzən Rayonu	41° 00' 00" N	049° 05' 00" E	Siyəzən		AZ-SIY
62.	Sumqayıt Şəhəri	40° 35' 00" N	049° 40' 00" E	Sumqayıt		AZ-SM
63.	Şuşa Rayonu	39° 40' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	Şuşa	NK	AZ-SUS
64.	Tərtər Rayonu	39° 40' 00" N	047° 40' 00" E	Tərtər	NK	AZ-TAR
65.	Tovuz Rayonu	41° 00' 00" N	045° 45' 00" E	Tovuz		AZ-TOV
66.	Ucar Rayonu	40° 25' 00" N	047° 45' 00" E	Ucar		AZ-UCA
67.	Xaçmaz Rayonu	41° 35' 00" N	048° 45' 00" E	Xaçmaz		AZ-XAC
68.	Xankəndi Şəhəri	39° 49' 00" N	046° 48' 00" E	Xankəndi	NK	AZ-XA
69.	Xızı Rayonu	40° 45' 00" N	049° 10' 00" E	Xızı		AZ-XIZ
70.	Xocalı Rayonu	39° 50' 00" N	046° 45' 00" E	Xocalı	NK	AZ-XCI
71.	Xocavənd Rayonu	39° 40' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	Xocavənd	NK	AZ-XVD
72.	Yardımlı Rayonu	38° 55' 00" N	048° 15' 00" E	Yardımlı		AZ-YAR
73.	Yevlax Rayonu	40° 40' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	Yevlax		AZ-YEV
74.	Yevlax Şəhəri	40° 35' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	Yevlax		AZ-YE
75.	Zəngilan Rayonu	39° 05' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	Zəngilan		AZ-ZAN
76.	Zaqatala Rayonu	41° 35' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	Zaqatala		AZ-ZAQ
77.	Zərdab Rayonu	40° 15' 00" N	047° 45' 00" E	Zərdab		AZ-ZAR

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Useful references

US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Azerbaijan:

http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/Policies/Azerbaijan_Country_Policy_webversion_Jun2014.pdf

The Unicode Consortium: www.unicode.org

International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org

ISO Online Browsing Platform records for Azerbaijan:

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#iso:code:3166:AZ>

Languages: www.ethnologue.com , www.omniglot.com

Administrative divisions: <http://www.statoids.com>

BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17043424>

CIA World Factbook – Azerbaijan: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>

The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

<https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en>

Geographic Information System on The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

website: <https://www.stat.gov.az/map/>

Azeri language web pages of the State Committee of Land and Cartography

<http://www.dtxk.gov.az>

Relevant legislation is available at the www.meclis.gov.az website.

Compiled by PCGN

January 2021

Tel. 0207 591 3120

info@pcgn.org.uk