

TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

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 languages	Azerbaijani (Azeri) (<i>aze</i>) 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 / Area	9.89 million ³ / 86,600km ²

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. From 1920 Azerbaijan was incorporated into the Soviet Union. The former Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic declared independence from the Soviet Union on 30th August 1991.

Geographical names policy and sources

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 Committee of Land and Cartography of Azerbaijan Republic*⁵. 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.

The best digitally available mapping source is <https://gomap.az/>. Note that it is important to select the AZ language option, as the place names are tailored in the 'EN' and 'RU' options. Note too that,

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

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

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 http://www.azerbaijan.az/StatePower/CommitteeConcern/committeeConcern_e.html [site not currently available]

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though the map covers Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, it can only be used as a source for Azerbaijani areas.

The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan website maintains a Geographic Information System, which is a useful source for the rayons of Azerbaijan: <https://www.stat.gov.az/map/>

The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [Geographic Names Server \(GNS\)](#) can also be used as a source for names.

Map of Azerbaijan



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Language

Azerbaijani (Azeri) is the official language of Azerbaijan⁶. Azerbaijani was written in the Perso-Arabic script until 1929 when a Roman alphabet was introduced. In 1939, this Roman script was replaced with a Cyrillic script. 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.

⁶ <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 encodings⁷):

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	018F	ə ⁸	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

Note that the formerly disputed territory of Nagornyy Karabakh in western Azerbaijan is, as of January 2024, under the control of Azerbaijan, and the some 100,000 ethnic Armenians that had inhabited it until September 2023 have departed. Until this time, it had been predominantly Armenian-populated and was considered by Armenia to be a breakaway “republic”, though internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.

The Azeri translation for this area is Dağlıq Qarabağ, which may be encountered on Azerbaijani sources. This formerly disputed area should now simply be shown as part of Azerbaijan with no special notes, boundaries, or names. For more information, please contact PCGN.

Naxçıvan

Naxçıvan Muxtar Respublikası (Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic)⁹ is an exclave of Azerbaijan bordering Armenia, Iran and Turkey. It is a separate autonomous area of 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 country¹⁰. The Azerbaijan Constitution describes Naxçıvan legislative, judicial and executive responsibilities, but notes in Article 141 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.

⁷ See www.unicode.org

⁸ 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.

⁹ Naxçıvan is the Azerbaijani spelling. It may be seen in English sources in a variety of ways including: Nakhichevan, Nakhchivan, Nakhichevan.

¹⁰ This law is available in English at

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL\(2009\)163-e#:~:text=In%20accordance%20with%20the%20Constitution,state%20guarantees%20for%20its%20implementation.](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL(2009)163-e#:~:text=In%20accordance%20with%20the%20Constitution,state%20guarantees%20for%20its%20implementation.)

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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.

Administrative divisions

Azerbaijan comprises 66 districts (*rayon*¹¹) and 11 municipalities (*şəhər*¹²) at the first-order administrative level (ADM1). Seven districts and one municipality (city) fall into Naxçıvan - shown *in blue type and italics* in the table below.

Name	Latitude	Longitude	ISO 3166-2 code	Rayon centre
Abşeron Rayonu	40° 25' 00" N	049° 20' 00" E	AZ-ABS	Xırdalan
Ağcabədi Rayonu	40° 00' 00" N	047° 25' 00" E	AZ-AGC	Ağcabədi
Ağdam Rayonu*	40° 00' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	AZ-AGM	Ağdam
Ağdaş Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	047° 25' 00" E	AZ-AGS	Ağdaş
Ağstafa Rayonu	41° 15' 00" N	045° 30' 00" E	AZ-AGA	Ağstafa
Ağsu Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	048° 20' 00" E	AZ-AGU	Ağsu
Astara Rayonu	38° 30' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	AZ-AST	Astara
<i>Babək Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 09' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 22' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-BAB</i>	<i>Babək</i>
Bakı Şəhəri	40° 18' 00" N	049° 43' 00" E	AZ-BA	Bakı
Balakən Rayonu	41° 45' 00" N	046° 25' 00" E	AZ-BAL	Balakən
Beyləqan Rayonu	39° 45' 00" N	047° 40' 00" E	AZ-BEY	Beyləqan
Bərdə Rayonu	40° 20' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	AZ-BAR	Bərdə
Biləsuvar Rayonu	39° 30' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	AZ-BIL	Biləsuvar
Cəbrayıl Rayonu*	39° 20' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	AZ-CAB	Cəbrayıl
Cəlilabad Rayonu	39° 15' 00" N	048° 30' 00" E	AZ-CAL	Cəlilabad
<i>Culfa Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 10' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 40' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-CUL</i>	<i>Culfa</i>
Daşkəsən Rayonu	40° 25' 00" N	046° 00' 00" E	AZ-DAS	Daşkəsən
Füzuli Rayonu*	39° 35' 00" N	047° 20' 00" E	AZ-FUZ	Füzuli
Gədəbəy Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	045° 40' 00" E	AZ-GAD	Gədəbəy

¹¹ This is the singular form; the plural would be *rayonlar*.

¹² This is the singular form; the plural would be *şəhərlər*.

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Name	Latitude	Longitude	ISO 3166-2 code	Rayon centre
Gəncə Şəhəri	40° 39' 00" N	046° 21' 00" E	AZ-GA	Gəncə
Goranboy Rayonu*	40° 35' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	AZ-GOR	Goranboy
Göyçay Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	047° 50' 00" E	AZ-GOY	Göyçay
Göygöl Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	046° 20' 00" E	AZ-GYG	Göygöl
Hacıqabul Rayonu	40° 05' 00" N	048° 55' 00" E	AZ-HAC	Hacıqabul ¹³
İmişli Rayonu	39° 50' 00" N	048° 05' 00" E	AZ-IMI	İmişli
İsmayıllı Rayonu	40° 50' 00" N	048° 10' 00" E	AZ-ISM	İsmayıllı
Kəlbəcər Rayonu*	40° 05' 00" N	046° 10' 00" E	AZ-KAL	Kəlbəcər
<i>Kəngərli Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 25' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 15' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-KAN</i>	<i>Qıvrıq</i>
Kürdəmir Rayonu	40° 15' 00" N	048° 10' 00" E	AZ-KUR	Kürdəmir
Laçın Rayonu*	39° 40' 00" N	046° 25' 00" E	AZ-LAC	Laçın
Lerik Rayonu	38° 45' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	AZ-LER	Lerik
Lənkəran Rayonu	38° 55' 00" N	048° 55' 00" E	AZ-LAN	Lənkəran
Lənkəran Şəhəri	38° 44' 00" N	048° 50' 00" E	AZ-LA	Lənkəran
Masallı Rayonu	39° 00' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	AZ-MAS	Masallı
Mingəçevir Şəhəri	40° 46' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	AZ-MI	Mingəçevir
Naftalan Şəhəri	40° 29' 00" N	046° 43' 00" E	AZ-NA	Naftalan
<i>Naxçıvan Şəhəri</i>	<i>39° 20' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 30' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-NX</i>	<i>Naxçıvan</i>
Neftçala Rayonu	39° 20' 00" N	049° 00' 00" E	AZ-NEF	Neftçala
Oğuz Rayonu	41° 05' 00" N	047° 30' 00" E	AZ-OGU	Oğuz
<i>Ordubad Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 05' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 55' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-ORD</i>	<i>Ordubad</i>
Qax Rayonu	41° 20' 00" N	046° 45' 00" E	AZ-QAX	Qax
Qazax Rayonu	41° 10' 00" N	045° 10' 00" E	AZ-QAZ	Qazax
Qəbələ Rayonu	40° 55' 00" N	047° 50' 00" E	AZ-QAB	Qəbələ
Qobustan Rayonu	40° 30' 00" N	049° 00' 00" E	AZ-QOB	Qobustan
Quba Rayonu	41° 10' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	AZ-QBA	Quba
Qubadlı Rayonu*	39° 20' 00" N	046° 35' 00" E	AZ-QBI	Qubadlı
Qusar Rayonu	41° 25' 00" N	048° 15' 00" E	AZ-QUS	Qusar
Saatlı Rayonu	39° 50' 00" N	048° 25' 00" E	AZ-SAT	Saatlı
Sabirabad Rayonu	39° 55' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	AZ-SAB	Sabirabad
Salyan Rayonu	39° 40' 00" N	049° 00' 00" E	AZ-SAL	Salyan
Samux Rayonu	40° 55' 00" N	046° 25' 00" E	AZ-SMX	Samux
<i>Sədərək Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 42' 00" N</i>	<i>044° 52' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-SAD</i>	<i>Heydərabad</i>
Siyəzən Rayonu	41° 00' 00" N	049° 05' 00" E	AZ-SIY	Siyəzən
Sumqayıt Şəhəri	40° 35' 00" N	049° 40' 00" E	AZ-SM	Sumqayıt
Şabran Rayonu	41° 10' 00" N	048° 55' 00" E	AZ-SBN	Şabran
<i>Şahbuz Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 25' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 35' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-SAH</i>	<i>Şahbuz</i>
Şamaxı Rayonu	40° 35' 00" N	048° 40' 00" E	AZ-SMI	Şamaxı
Şəki Rayonu	41° 05' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	AZ-SAK	Şəki
Şəki Şəhəri	41° 11' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	AZ-SA	Şəki

¹³ Also seen as Qazıməmməd.

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Name	Latitude	Longitude	ISO 3166-2 code	Rayon centre
Şəmkir Rayonu	40° 50' 00" N	046° 05' 00" E	AZ-SKR	Şəmkir
<i>Şərur Rayonu</i>	<i>39° 30' 00" N</i>	<i>045° 05' 00" E</i>	<i>AZ-SAR</i>	<i>Şərur</i>
Şirvan Şəhəri	39° 55' 00" N	048° 56' 00" E	AZ-SR	Şirvan
Şuşa Rayonu*	39° 40' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	AZ-SUS	Şuşa
Tərtər Rayonu*	39° 40' 00" N	047° 40' 00" E	AZ-TAR	Tərtər
Tovuz Rayonu	41° 00' 00" N	045° 45' 00" E	AZ-TOV	Tovuz
Ucar Rayonu	40° 25' 00" N	047° 45' 00" E	AZ-UCA	Ucar
Xaçmaz Rayonu	41° 35' 00" N	048° 45' 00" E	AZ-XAC	Xaçmaz
Xankəndi Şəhəri*	39° 49' 00" N	046° 48' 00" E	AZ-XA	Xankəndi
Xızı Rayonu	40° 45' 00" N	049° 10' 00" E	AZ-XIZ	Xızı
Xocalı Rayonu*	39° 50' 00" N	046° 45' 00" E	AZ-XCI	Xocalı
Xocavənd Rayonu*	39° 40' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	AZ-XVD	Xocavənd
Yardımlı Rayonu	38° 55' 00" N	048° 15' 00" E	AZ-YAR	Yardımlı
Yevlax Rayonu	40° 40' 00" N	047° 00' 00" E	AZ-YEV	Yevlax
Yevlax Şəhəri	40° 35' 00" N	047° 10' 00" E	AZ-YE	Yevlax
Zaqatala Rayonu	41° 35' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	AZ-ZAQ	Zaqatala
Zəngilan Rayonu*	39° 05' 00" N	046° 40' 00" E	AZ-ZAN	Zəngilan
Zərdab Rayonu	40° 15' 00" N	047° 45' 00" E	AZ-ZAR	Zərdab

For information, Rayons marked with * lie in the former Nagornyy Karabakh area; this marking does not need to be replicated on HMG products and is for information only.

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Approved Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
<i>Azerbaijan: Araz (Aras)¹⁴</i> <i>Turkey: Aras</i> <i>Iran: Rūd-e Aras (Aras)</i> <i>Armenia: Arak's (Aras)</i>	Araks, Arax, Erez	40°01'04"N 48°27'12"E	River
Caucasus	Kovkas (<i>Armenian</i>) Qafqaz (<i>Azerbaijani</i>)	42°00'00"N 45°00'00"E	Region
Greater Caucasus Range, <i>or simply</i> Caucasus Mountains	Böyük Qafqaz (<i>Azerbaijani</i>)	43°20'00"N 42°26'00"E	Mountain range
Caspian Sea ¹⁵		42°00'00"N 50°00'00"E	Sea
Kura River ¹⁶	Kür (<i>Azerbaijani</i>) Kura (<i>Turkish</i>)	39°21'42"N 49°20'49"E	River

¹⁴ The Aras river flows along the boundary between Turkey and the Naxçıvan area of Azerbaijan and then through Azerbaijan to the Kura river. The English conventional name *Aras* can be used alone, or the appropriate national forms of the name may be shown in each country.

¹⁵ The world's largest inland body of water.

¹⁶ Starting in Turkey, flows through Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea.

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PCGN Approved Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Mingəçevir su anbarı	Mingachevir reservoir	40°47'20"N 47°01'40"E	Reservoir
Talish Mountains	Talish	38°41'47"N 48°18'40"E	Mountains

Useful references

- Azeri language web pages of the State Committee of Land and Cartography
<http://www.dtxk.gov.az> [not currently available]
- Azerbaijan digital map platform: <https://gomap.az/>
- BBC Country Profile (no longer updated): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17043424>
- Geographic Information System on The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan website: <https://www.stat.gov.az/map/>
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform entry for Azerbaijan:
<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:3166:AZ>
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com , www.omniglot.com
- Relevant legislation is available at the www.meclis.gov.az website
- The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan:
<https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en>
- The Unicode Consortium: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Azerbaijan:
http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/Policies/Azerbaijan_Country_Policy_webversion_Jun2014.pdf
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server:
<http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

Compiled by PCGN

September 2019, reviewed and updated May 2026

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