

My cross-cultural experience in Tajikistan & US

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Tajikistan Location and Flag



The flag of Tajikistan was formally approved on November 24, 1992. Red represents unity as well as symbolism of former Soviet eras, green is representative of its agricultural foodstuffs, and white characterizes the cotton crop. The centered crown with seven stars signifies the country's freedom.



Tajikistan's History

Tajikistan is one of the oldest countries in the Central Asia. Tajikistan has been inhabited since at least the 4th millennium BC. From 1929 to 1991 Tajikistan was under USSR and after the collapse of soviet Union it became independent in 1991. The capital of Tajikistan and where I was born and raised is Dushanbe.



Interesting Facts about Tajikistan

- Green tea is the national drink
- The mountains and lakes are the best natural sights of Tajikistan (covers 93% of Tajikistan's surface area)
- The most important meal is the dinner (everyone has to be around dastarkhon and it begins when the oldest person starts eating)
- The world's longest glacier outside of the polar regions is found in Tajikistan



My Tajik culture

- The language, beliefs, and customs of the Tajik people, whose culture and identity date back to several thousand years, are very similar to those of Iran and Afghanistan. The majority of the population is Muslim, which has influenced the arts, cuisine, music, and festivals. Sincerity, family values, and a reputation for friendliness and hospitality characterize the Tajik people. Tajiks are typically conservative; Gender roles are still very rigid.



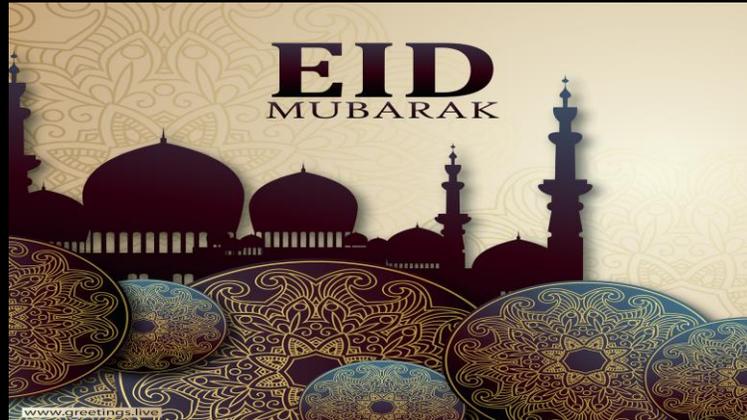
Religion

- Islam (Sunni)-95.7%
- Islam (Shia)-3%
- Minority Religions - Zoroastrians, Jews, and Baha'is



Religious Holidays in Tajikistan

- **Eid al-Fitr**- a religious holiday celebrated in Tajikistan and throughout the Islamic world, marks the end of the month-long, dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan. Eid al-Fitr is not just an opportunity to break the fast, but also a celebration of spiritual cleansing and renewal for adherents of Islam, which is the main religion in Tajikistan. Men gather at the mosque in the early morning for a special holiday prayer before visiting the graves of their deceased relatives and ancestors. Later in the day, people gather around a festive table with family and friends.
- **Eid al-Adha**-Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha (Idi Qurbon) 70 days after the end of Ramadan. The holiday commemorates a story from the Quran in which Allah stopped the faithful Ibrahim from sacrificing his son, Ismail, by providing a ram to be sacrificed in his place. It has become customary to sacrifice animals on Eid al-Adha in remembrance of Ibrahim's faith and God's mercy. The meat from the sacrifice is divided into three parts: one is given to the poor, one to relatives and the third is prepared for a festive meal to which friends and family are invited. People stand ready to welcome many guests into their home during this holiday.



Holidays in Tajikistan

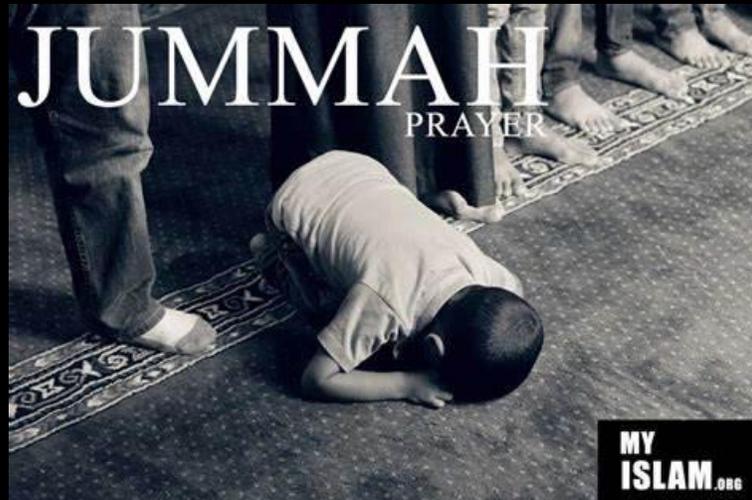
- There are other holidays in Tajikistan as well but they are not religious holidays so not everyone in the country celebrate them

- December 31-January 1, New Year
- February 23, Armed Forces Day
- March 8, International Women's Day / Mother's Day
- March 21, Navruz (sumanak dessert in Navruz)- celebrated over 3000 years
- May 1, Labour Day
- May 9, Victory Day
- June 27, Day of National Unity/National Reconciliation Day
- September 9, Independence Day
- September 19, Apple Festival
- September 12 or 19 (2nd or 3rd Sunday in September), Honey and Melon Festival



Religion

- Having been raised in a Muslim family and practicing Islam, my religion is a big part of my life and culture. We pray five times a day and males usually go to mosque every Friday to pray Jummah (prayer on Friday). Since most people in our country are Muslims, I found out that the other religions actually exist when I came to US.



Clothes

- Tajik traditional clothes differ from region to region in terms of color, embroidered patterns, style. But there are some common features in every national costume. The most common traditional garment for women is a straight dress, widening at the bottom, worn over trousers. The traditional dress of the Tajik women is long shapeless attire prepared with showy color patterns along with the matching pants. The dress is usually accompanied with embroidered traditional shoes. Some women also use Scarf or Hijab in order to cover their head or neck.



Food

- Tajik food has its own history behind it. Tajik people usually make one or two traditional foods per day unlike in US in Tajikistan people rarely order takeout or go to restaurants the food is usually made at home.

-Osh

- Mantu (Dumplings)

-Shurbo / Khom-Shurbo (Soup)

-Shirchoy (Salted Milk-tea)

- Sambusa (Puff Pastry)

-Qurutob

-Lagman (Spicy Soup)

-Damlama (Stew)

-Siyoh-alaf

- Fatir-masko (Local Bread)

-Kabob Pamir



Cross cultural experience within NYC

- I came to NYC in 2016, and the diversity in this city was shocking to me. I've been born and raised in Tajikistan and in my country I mostly used to see people from my own culture and religion. Here in NYC I saw people from different backgrounds like different races, cultures and religions. One of my favorite things from different cultures is the food. I tried Pakistani, Turkish, and Japanese foods for the first time in here and I loved them all. The diversity in NYC helped me see a lot of things in different light. Some things that might seem totally normal in one culture might be considered offensive in another culture. Therefore when deciding on what topic I wanted to make my essay about, I thought about how especially when we live in such a diverse city like NYC multicultural education is important in promoting understanding between people from different cultures. Understanding the basic dos and don'ts from different cultures helps us interact with people from different cultures.



Citations

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