

UYGHUR

SOME USEFUL PHRASES IN UYGHUR

ياخشىمۇسىز، مېنىڭ ئىسمىم جون.
[jɑxʰʃimʊsɪz mɛ'nɪŋ ɪs'mɪm dʒɑn]
/Yakh-shimusiz, mening ismim Jon./
Hi. My name is John.

ئىسمىڭىز نېمە؟
[ʔismɪŋɪz nɪ'mɛ]
/Ismingiz nime?/
What is your name?

قانداق ئەھۋالدىڭىز؟
[qɑn'dɑq ɛh'wɑlɪŋɪz]
/Qandaq eh-walingiz?/
How are you doing?

قانداق ئەھۋالدىڭىز؟ مەن ئىندىيانادىن.
[sɪz qɛyɛr'dɪn mɛn ɪndi'anɑdɪn]
/Siz qeyerdin? Men Indianadin./
Where are you from? I am from Indiana.

ئازراق چاي ئىچەمسىز؟
[ɑz'raq tʃɑɪ ʔɪtʃɛmsɪz]
/Azraq chay ichemsiz?/
Would you like some tea?

ئېتىڭىز بەك چىرايلىقكەن.
[ʔɛtɪŋɪz bɛk tʃɪ'rɑɪlɪqkɛn]
/Etingiz bek chirayliqken./
You have a beautiful horse.

ھاجەتخانا قەيەردە؟
[hɑ'dʒɛt•xɑ nɑ 'qɛjɛrdɛ]
/Hajet-khana qeyerde?/
Where is the bathroom?

كۆپ رەھمەت!
[køp rɛx'mɛt]
/Köp rekh-met!/
Thank you very much.

خوش!
[xoʃ]
/Khosh!/
Good-bye.

Special thanks goes to Niyaz Kurban for his contributions to this pamphlet.

FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN MORE ABOUT UYGHURS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

1. Uyghur is spoken natively by over 11 million worldwide, mainly in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, but in other Central Asia countries as well, specifically Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.
2. As a member of the Altaic language family, Uyghur shares structural similarities to other Turkic languages such as vowel harmony and subject-object-verb word order, and it is a gateway to learning other Turkic languages, such as Chaghatay.
3. Uyghur is the only major Turkic language to still predominately use a Perso-Arabic writing system.
4. The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China is the largest Chinese administrative division and spans 642,800 sq mi.
5. Uyghur cuisine is a perfect blend of Central Asia and Chinese influences. Using lots of seasonings, fresh vegetables an assortment of meats, including beef, chicken, fish, goose, mutton, and camel!

ABOUT US

The Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University develops materials for learning and teaching a wide variety of Central Asian languages.

For more information, go to www.iub.edu/~celcar.



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Center for Languages of the
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WHO ARE THE UYGHURS?

As one of the oldest Central Asian Turkic people, the Uyghurs primarily live in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which is situated in the north western corner of the People's Republic of China (PRC). As the largest provincial unit in China, the region also makes up about one-sixth of the PRC's total area. Today, approximately 10 million Uyghurs, who make the largest non-Chinese population of China, live in the area as a bumper between China and Central Asian states. Some other

Uyghur diasporas communities are also found in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia which counted a population about more than one million.

WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE IS UYGHUR?

Uyghur is an Altaic language belonging to the Karluk subdivision of the Turkic language family. It is spoken natively by approximately 11 million people worldwide (not counting those who speak it as a second language) and is an official language of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), along with Mandarin Chinese. However, due to historical reasons, Mandarin Chinese is not spoken widely in southern Xinjiang. Nowadays, the Uyghur language is also used as lingua franca even among non-Uyghurs, such as Shibes, Wakhis, and Tajiks of Xinjiang, and even by some Russian and Daur.

Uyghur is an agglutinative language with a subject object verb-word order. It has vowel harmony, which follows pretty consistent rules. Nouns are inflected for number and case, but not gender and definiteness like in many other languages. There are two numbers such as singular and plural, and six different cases similar to all other Turkic languages. Verbs are conjugated for tenses, voices, aspects, and mood.

The core lexicon of the Uyghur language is of Turkic origin, but due to the different kinds of language contact through the history of the region, it has

adopted many loanwords (mostly nouns) from Persian, as well. Many words of Arabic origin have also entered the language directly through Islamic literature after the introduction of Islam around the mid-10th century. Russian and Chinese are the greatest influence in more recent times, however a number of loanwords of European origin have also reached Uyghur through Russia's influence over the region during recent modern history.

WHAT ALPHABET DOES UYGHUR USE?

Until the late 8th century, Uyghur was written using the Orkhon, or Old Turkic, alphabet. However, between the 8th and the 16th centuries, Uyghur was written using an alphabet system known as Old Uyghur, derived from Sogdian (an Iranian language formerly spoken in today's Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). Unlike Sogdian, which was written from right to left in horizontal lines, the Old Uyghur alphabet was written from left to right in vertical columns. Uyghur has also been written with the

Syriac alphabet, but mostly in Christian documents. The later Mongolian vertical script was developed as an adoption of the Uyghur script to write the Mongolian language.

From the 16th century until the early 20th century,

Uyghur was written with a version of the Arabic alphabet known as "Chagatay". During the 20th century a number of versions of the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets were adopted to write Uyghur as the direct result of the continuous political changes over the region. However the Latin alphabet was unpopular, and in 1987 the Arabic script was reinstated as the official script for Uyghur in China. However, a Cyrillic based Uyghur alphabet is still used among the Uyghurs in other Central Asian countries, along with the partial employment of Arabic script.

WHAT IS UYGHUR CULTURE LIKE?

Due to its location along the route of the ancient Silk Road, the Uyghur region became a crossroad for trade and commercial exchange between the East and West, and therefore a melding and

exchanging between Asian and European cultures.

Traditionally, Uyghurs are a very family and community oriented society. Each individual is identified with reference to his or her family. And Uyghur neighborhoods are traditionally divided into *mähällä*, a primary source of social services for its residents. Furthermore, Members of the *mähällä* call on each other often for help and to organize traditional cultural events and ceremonies for the community.

Uyghurs value the extremely rich cultural heritage from their Central Asian ancestors. Exceptional hospitality is a long lasting tradition among Uyghurs for which they are continually praised by all visitors. The Uyghurs are also well-known for their talents in singing and dancing. *The Twelve Muqams* is the national oral epic of Uyghurs and includes performances of classical and folkloric song, music, and dance. In fact, Uyghur culture has dozens of traditional musical instruments, including different kinds of strings, winds and tambourines. Uyghur literature, which dates back to the Orkhon inscriptions, includes folktales, fables, jokes, poems, and proverbs. Other applied arts for which Uyghurs are well-known include metal engraving, wood carving, gemstone cutting, embroidery, and weaving. Traditional applied arts are still highly valued, and used in people's everyday life.

Traditional Uyghur cuisine typically includes lots of roasted mutton, roasted fish, and rice. Some signature dishes are *läghmān* (a noodle dish), *pilaf* (a rice dish), and *kebabs* (seasoned and skewered meat roasted on a grill). Because the majority of Uyghurs are Sunni Muslim, the food is predominately *halal*.

