

# Afghanistan



Afghanistan is a country located within south-central Asia with a population of around 38 million citizens. It is known for its beautiful scenery, highlands and masses of natural resources. Afghanistan shares a border with Pakistan in the south and east; Iran to the west; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north; and China to the far northeast. The capital city is Kabul and is home to 3 million residents. The most widely practiced 'Afghan' religion is Islam.

## Language

Pashto and Dari are the two official languages of Afghanistan and Dari is often referred to as 'Afghan Persian'. More than two-fifths of the population speak Pashto, while about half speak some dialect of Persian.

While the Afghan dialect of Persian is generally termed "Dari," a number of dialects are spoken among various people of Afghanistan including Farsi. Dari and Farsi are two accents of the same language and the transition from one dialect into another across the country is often unnoticeable. Dari, Farsi, and Pashto are all Iranian languages belonging to the Indo-European language family, they both use the Arabic Alphabet, but they are completely different from the Arabic language.

## The Care System

Millions of children under the age of 18 in Afghanistan are exposed to extreme violence due to on-going fights and a poor economy. The increase in number of incidents in today's modern age has become an alarming cause for concern. UNICEF states "Afghan girls face early marriage, honour killings, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. Afghan boys suffer many of the same risks, along with military recruitment into armed conflict, and sexual exploitation. Both girls and boys are exposed to hazardous practices and over the last decade, 2.7 million Afghans have left their country in the hopes of finding a better life." Due to the harsh reality and circumstances these children face, they are left with the difficult and unimaginable act of leaving their home town and families to start a new life in Europe seeking work and those most at risk include boys between the ages of 12 - 17. Alone, these children are exposed to huge threats as they become easy targets for human traffickers.



## Clothing

Afghan clothing differs between genders, generally females dress consists of four main items including trousers (tombaani), an overdress (parahaan), head scarf (chaadar) and shoes (payzarr). This combination is known as Afghan women dress (Kaalai Afghani). The traditional dress for women of Afghanistan is colourful and distinctive and embodies beautiful and intricate embroidery. Many Afghan women also choose to wear traditional Islamic wear known as a burka (a long loose garment covering the body from head to feet).

The classic Afghanistan clothing for men is known as 'Perahan Tunban', the outfit consists of a knee length dress and baggy trousers and is the most common and popular attire worn. Many Afghan men also wear waistcoats on top of their clothing. Perahan Tunban are worn both as casual and formal clothing. The trousers of men (tunban) is made so that the waist is adjustable, and it is adjusted and held up using a cloth cord. Afghan men also use numerous types of hats including the Khandhari cap however the most common type includes the turban, there are various variations on how one is styled and it differs according to the region the individuals are from.

## Food

The national dish of Afghanistan is known as 'Kabuli Pulao' and there are many variations of the dish itself. It is composed mainly of steam rice with raisins and carrots and is often accompanied with lamb, vegetables or beans. Lamb and chicken are widely enjoyed and are mostly served with naan and/or rice as rice is a specialty and considered the best part of any meal.

Mantu is a common well liked dumpling dish which involves filling pastry with a meat and onion mixture, steaming them, then serving it with a split pea sauce and garlic yoghurt. Traditional drink in Afghanistan includes tea is tea (chai). Green tea is popular option usually drunk with breakfast accompanied with a flatbread known as a 'Paratha'. It is also served after the meal because it helps the digesting the food in very short period of time.

An important expression of food culture in Afghanistan is the Dastarkhan, a spread of dishes arranged on a tablecloth that is typically laid on the floor. Afghans usually don't use cutlery and eat with their right hands using naan as a scoop.

## Education

The education system in Afghanistan is poor due to conflict and poverty, many children are denied an access to their learning and many girls still lack equal opportunities. Factors such as girls marrying young, insufficient transport and a shortage of schools are just a few of the various reasons as to why education isn't completed or deemed essential.

UNICEF states "An estimated 3.7 million children are out-of-school in Afghanistan – 60% of them are girls." Once the children attend school their education is compromised as only 48% of teachers have the minimum academic qualifications required in order to teach thus leading to further issues and children receiving low quality education.



### For more information

<https://www.sporcle.com/blog/2019/09/where-is-afghanistan/>

<https://www.afghan-web.com/culture/clothes/>

<https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education>