

BAKU

An aerial photograph of Baku, Azerbaijan, showing the city skyline and the Caspian Sea. The city is built on a hillside overlooking the water, with modern skyscrapers and a large circular building. The Caspian Sea is visible in the foreground, with a pier and some boats. The sky is overcast.

27–28 October 2026

Baku, Azerbaijan

General information

Baku is the capital and largest city of Azerbaijan, as well as the largest city on the Caspian Sea and of the Caucasus region. Located 28 meters (92 feet) below sea level, Baku is the world's lowest-lying national capital and the largest city with this distinction. The central part of the city goes down systematically to the Baku Bay like an amphitheater. Baku is known as the "City of Winds", there are two main gusts to look out for in Baku - the warmer Gilavar blowing from the south, and the cool Khazri sweeping down from the north.

It is a lively and very interesting city, where life does not stop even at night. Over the last ten years, Baku has greatly changed: new multi-story buildings of shopping centers, hotels and banks harmonize very well with the old buildings.

In Baku you will discover a constantly evolving tapestry of life and energy from bazaar to penthouse. Being a coastal city, Baku is intrinsically open-minded and hospitable. Guests are welcome to stroll along the Caspian promenade (the Boulevard), visit the Old City (known locally as İçərişəhər) and enjoy the unique architectural blend of East and West.



Baku's Old City (İçərişəhər)

Baku's medieval core is a UNESCO-protected site surrounded by 12th-century walls, brimming with history and Eastern architecture. Here you'll find the Maiden Tower, Baku's most mysterious site - no one knows for certain what it was originally built for! Meanwhile, occupying the highest spot in the citadel, the Shirvanshahs' Palace was the 15th-century residence of Azerbaijan's medieval rulers. Beyond its main attractions, the 'Icherisheher,' as it's called by the locals, is a labyrinth of narrow alleyways home to some of Baku's oldest residents, as well as artists' workshops, souvenir stalls and traditional restaurants serving classic Azerbaijani dishes.

When Baku's oil industry boomed in the late 1800s, a new architectural layer appeared around the Old City. Combining everything from Gothic to baroque, neoclassical and art nouveau, these buildings nonetheless blended harmoniously into the urban landscape.



Ateshgah

The extraordinary landscape surrounding Baku, rich in oil and subterranean gases, has intrigued travelers since time immemorial. For centuries the Ateshgah Fire Temple in the village of Surakhani has been attracting crowds of thrill seekers. Built in the 17th - 18th centuries around naturally burning flames previously worshipped by Zoroastrians, fire-worshipping Hindus made pilgrimages to the site until the 1880s. Today it houses a well-designed museum.



Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is situated in the southeastern part of the Transcaucasian region. It borders on Russia, Georgia, Iran, Armenia and Türkiye. The eastern part of the country is bordered by the Caspian Sea. Almost half of Azerbaijan's territory features mountainous terrain. Spain, Greece, Türkiye and Korea lie in on the same parallel as Azerbaijan.

The total area of the country is 86.6 thousand sq km. Azerbaijan stretches 400 km from north to south and 500 km from east to west. The population is more than 10 million people. The official language is Azerbaijani, but English and Russian are widely understood and spoken in the capital as well. Generally Azerbaijan is a multicultural nation home to many different and often unique - languages.



A Global Venue for International Events

Azerbaijan has successfully hosted numerous major international events, including the Eurovision Song Contest 2012, the inaugural European Games in 2015, the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix since 2017, the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games in 2017, the final of the 2018-19 UEFA Europa League, UEFA Euro 2020 matches, the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), and the 13th session of the World Urban Forum in 2026.



Culture

Music is deeply rooted in Baku's cultural identity. Mugham, a traditional genre of Azerbaijani music, has been recognized by UNESCO as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Alongside traditional music, Baku also has a vibrant contemporary music scene, including pop, rock, and jazz. The city regularly hosts cultural events such as the Baku International Jazz Festival and the Baku International Film Festival.



Little about Land of Fire

Azerbaijan is often called the Land of Fire and there are several reasons why. The word 'Azerbaijan' literally means 'protector of fire'; the country is abundant in oil and natural gas; it was a center of fire worshipping; and fire has always been one of the symbols of our capital, Baku, which today is reflected in the amazing Flame Towers.



Multicultural Azerbaijan

Once situated along the Great Silk Road, many peoples have passed through these lands, helping to shape the nation's unique traditions of tolerance and hospitality. Today, Azerbaijan is a secular country where all confessions are represented, where Muslims, Christians, Jews and many other religious communities have been living in peace for centuries.



Mud Volcano Capital

Azerbaijan is home to an amazing collection of about 350 mud volcanoes, many of which are found in a relatively small area around Baku and nearby areas of the Caspian Sea. It's not surprising then that Azerbaijan is sometimes called 'the mud volcano capital of the world' - the ground here can indeed be messy, bubbling and explosive!



The Heydar Aliyev Centre

The Heydar Aliyev Centre, an architectural masterpiece designed by the late Zaha Hadid, won the Design of the Year award from the London Design Museum in 2014. Its visionary, flowing form has become a symbol of modern Baku - not a single straight line was used in its design. Inside, visitors can explore world-class museums and exhibitions, including a unique display of classic cars that showcases automotive history in an elegant setting.



Carpet Weaving

Azerbaijan is an ancient center of carpet weaving home to seven regional schools, each distinguished by their own unique combination of patterns, colors and motifs. What's more, Baku boasts the state-of-the-art Carpet Museum, which is shaped like a rolled-up rug and houses the world's largest collection of Azerbaijani carpets.





Baku White City

The Black City emerged in the late 19th century in the eastern part of Baku - a piece of urban heritage from the first oil boom and a product of the city's early industrial development. For more than 100 years, it played a major role in the oil industry, serving as a center for refining, storage, and transportation of "black gold."

Today, a unique opportunity has arisen to revitalize the Black City area - an industrial site located at the heart of Baku Bay, just east of the city center. Covering 1,650 hectares and surrounded by rapidly developing infrastructure, the site is now positioned to be transformed for a new purpose and stands as one of the most attractive investment prospects.



Oil Rocks - The World's First City on the Sea

Oil Rocks (Neft Daşları) is one of the most extraordinary places in Azerbaijan's oil history. Located about 100 kilometers from Baku and 55 kilometers from the nearest shore in the Caspian Sea, this legendary industrial settlement became the world's first operational offshore oil platform.

Originally named “Black Stones,” the site was later renamed “Oil Rocks” to highlight the resource that shaped its legacy. Built entirely on steel structures above the sea, Oil Rocks is not just a platform - it's a functioning town on water, complete with residential buildings, roads, and bridges connecting dozens of drilling rigs.

Recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world's first offshore oil platform, Oil Rocks remains a symbol of innovation and determination. It played a vital role in Azerbaijan's oil boom and continues to stand as a fascinating example of industrial heritage in the middle of the Caspian Sea.



Last But Not Least

In Baku, you'll find restaurants, bars, and lounges that seamlessly combine Eastern hospitality with a Western mindset, along with an excellent selection of cafes, bistros, and eateries serving traditional Azerbaijani cuisine. The city also offers beautiful seaside resorts and promenades, where visitors can relax by the Caspian Sea and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of Baku's coastline.