



Culture and Customs of Afghanistan (Cultures and Customs of the World)

Hafizullah Emadi

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Afghanistan has been at the crossroads of many cultures and civilizations, occupying a unique place in the cultural geography of Central Asia. Invading tribes and armies passed through ancient Afghanistan and left their imprint on the culture, customs, and way of life there. In recent history, Afghanistan has been the focus of international attention since the Soviet invasion and occupation of 1979-1989, the brutal civil war that ensued, and the subsequent U.S. invasion to topple the Taliban regime. As the country struggles to stabilize and rebuild, this volume is the first to reveal the people and ways of life that have been in flux for so long.

Emadi brings an insider's knowledge and authority to the accessible narrative. Students and general readers will find a clear explanation of the land, people, economy, social stratification, and history as context for the chapters that follow. In the chapter on Religion and Religious Thought, the predominant Islamic religion is largely intertwined with political events that have brought Afghanistan such attention. The lesser-known literature and the arts are brought to light next. A strong Architecture, Housing, and Settlements chapter highlights many styles unfamiliar to most Westerners. Coverage of Afghan cooking and cuisine brings a more intimate understanding of the culture. The chapter on Family, Women, and Gender will draw readers in with its survey of how the family works, what is expected of women, and what courtship, marriage, childrearing, and education are like today. A standout of the Festivals and Leisure Activities chapter is the vivid rendering of the sport called Buzkashi, where men on horseback vie to move an animal carcass across a field to a goal. A final chapter on Lifestyles, Media, and Education describes the urban vs. rural lifestyles, the state of communications, and the prospects for schooling post Taliban. A country map, glossary, resource guide, and photos complement the text.

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