

Uzbekistan

- ◆ The capital city of Uzbekistan is Tashkent.
- ◆ Most of the people of Uzbekistan practice Islam.
- ◆ The official language of Uzbekistan is Uzbek, but Russian and other languages are also spoken.
- ◆ Uzbekistan grows more cotton than any other country in the world. It is their most important crop.
- ◆ Uzbeks have little religious freedom. The government often takes away Bibles that are shipped into the country and closes down churches.
- ◆ Uzbekistan is surrounded by Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.
- ◆ Every year, a strong dry wind from Afghanistan called the *Afghanets* blows dust and dirt into Uzbekistan for two months or more. It forces people to cover their faces when they go outside.
- ◆ Many farmers raise karakul sheep. Their wool is the best kind for making quality coats, gloves, and hats.
- ◆ Uzbeks are very good at crafts and are known for their carpets, pottery, jewelry, embroidery, and carved wood.



Story: Harvest Time

Nila's hair was tucked under a colored scarf and she had a canvas sack slung over one shoulder. She made her way through rows of waist-high cotton plants as her children straggled behind her. They were picking bolls of white fluffy cotton and putting them in their sacks. Even though her children were 10 and 14, they weren't in school. When harvest time came, everybody who could work was needed in the fields. It helped the family earn some extra money for food and winter clothes. Also, the government encourages everyone to help with the harvest, even though there are laws that forbid the practice of children missing school to work in the fields.



The cotton harvest is an important source of money for the Uzbek people.

Story cont...

About 1.5 to 2 million school children between the ages of 10 and 16 are forced to pick cotton each year between September and November. Often they are badly scratched from the bushes, do not have shoes suitable for field work, and are not given proper bags to hold the cotton.

Police and security people surround the cotton fields to keep reporters away and to push the workers to pick enough cotton to meet the demands set by the government. The government tries to hide from the rest of the world the fact that they are breaking their own laws. Some companies that make clothes have refused to buy cotton from Uzbekistan, but enough companies buy it to cause the problem to continue.



Recipe: Khuil Norin



1 lb beef or lamb, cubed
8 cups beef broth
2 cups linguine, cooked
1 teaspoon butter

salt and pepper to taste
1 small onion, chopped
1 teaspoon cumin seed

Bring meat and broth to a simmer for 30 minutes. Add butter, salt, pepper and cumin. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add linguine and heat through. Serves 4.

Activity: Askia

Askia is a riddle game. Two or more players are needed to play.

Have all children sit in a circle. Pick someone to be "it." "It" thinks up an object, and then gives a description of the object he is thinking of. Going around the circle, the children take turns asking a question about the object. The child who guesses the object first is "it."



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