

# KAZAKHSTAN: *ASTANA AND BEYOND*

## PROFILE

ARRIVED JULY 2022  
MARRIED COUPLE  
EARLY 40's

## Introduction

I recently began working in a British International School in Astana and my role is Deputy Head of Junior School. Previously, I have worked and lived in Thailand and Hong Kong and our relocation to Kazakhstan has been one of the smoothest and easiest.

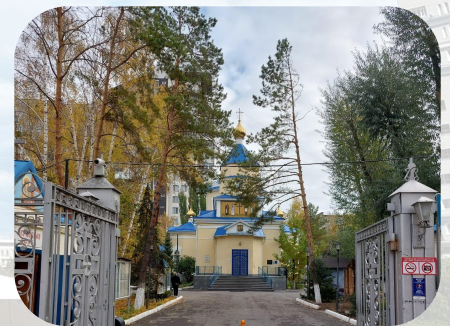
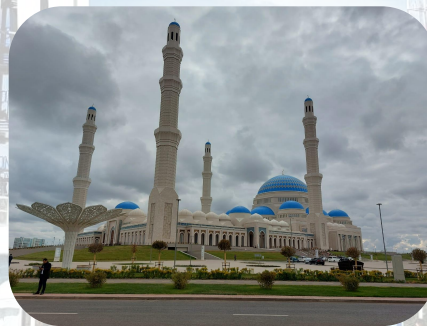
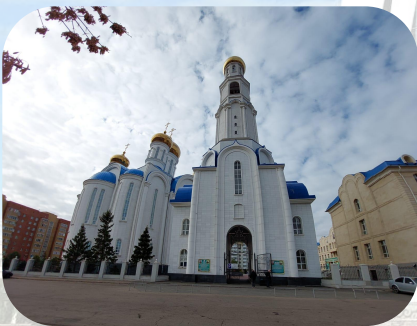
There are only a small number of international schools in Kazakhstan with Haileybury being the most recognised and renowned. Linked to Haileybury, UK, Kazakhstan has two schools one in Astana and one in Almaty. Both are excellent with other schools in Astana, such as Spectrum and QSI closely following, The school's all use a variety of curriculums ranging from the English National Curriculum, the International Baccalaureate and the American Curriculum.

## Packages

At the Haileybury Schools, these are very good. BUPA Global Medical Insurance, Housing Allowances that enable you to live in high quality accommodation, an above average basic salary, generous allowances for positions of responsibility, larger than usual end of contract bonuses and all school meals and transport to and from school are provided at no extra cost. The schools are also dedicated to developing and upskilling teachers with CPD opportunities readily promoted and available.

## Culture

Kazakhstan is traditionally a Muslim country, however, the lifestyle is very liberal compared to many other Islamic countries. There is no expected dress code or restrictions related to religion and there are many other religions present in Kazakhstan. Throughout the country you can visit and see a number of mosques, cathedrals and synagogues - all of which can be visited and are beautiful architecturally and interesting historically.



## The Country

As the ninth largest country in the world with a population of approximately nineteen million, Kazakhstan has many areas of unspoilt natural beauty and the cities never feel overcrowded. Almaty is larger with many tourist attractions, shopping facilities and breathtaking mountains. Astana the capital is a relatively new city. The Ishim River runs through Astana, with the more established 'right bank' and the newer ever growing 'left bank'. Astana also boasts a wide variety of fascinating buildings and stunning sunsets!

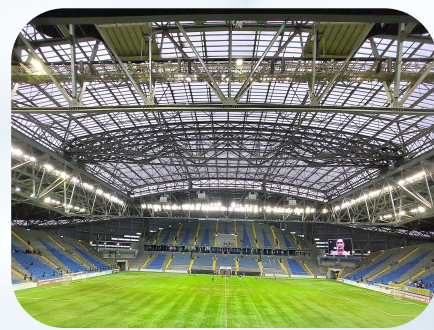
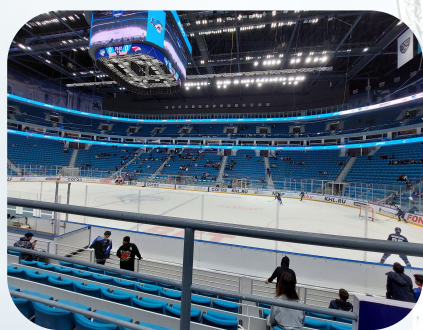


## Lifestyle

There is so much to do and see in Astana and Kazakhstan. In the cities there are markets and bazaars, selling a wide array of fruits, vegetables, meat and spices! They also house a number stalls with clothing and footwear for the changing seasons. Kazakhstan has very hot summers, especially in Astana and very cold winters with snow falling heavily and lasting from around November until March.

If you are interested in sport, there are many different options. Ice Hockey is extremely popular and football is a great evening out too. There are also many opportunities to cycle around Astana and along the river in the warmer months. Ice Skating and Skiing are also popular in Winter.

For those interested in the Arts, there is an amazing Opera House, Concert Hall and Ballet Theatre, where you can enjoy a variety of performances throughout the year.



## Cuisine

The food in Kazakhstan is very much based around meat and vegetable dishes, however, many vegetarians and vegans find plenty of options to suit their dietary needs. Horse, beef and chicken are the most commonly found meats. Pork is very limited and often substituted with beef or chicken, for example, sausages and bacon.

In Astana and Almaty there is a real cafe culture and you will find restaurants, coffee shops, bars and tea rooms all over both cities. Tea is a huge favourite in Kazakh culture, especially fruit and herbal teas. Dining out can be reasonable in the more local places. Slightly more expensive options are available for steak dinners and brunches in some of the hotels. There are also delivery options and take away apps on hand to get food sent right to your front door.

## Travel

Visiting different places and getting around Kazakhstan is relatively easy and inexpensive. Within the cities there are buses, trains and taxis. It is recommended to use an app called Yandex, to book taxis, which is similar to other taxi apps around the world. Traveling further afield the trains can take you all over the country, with a number of sleeper options for the longer trips. Flights with several national or low cost carriers can take you to various cities around Kazakhstan and vary in length from one to two hours.

If you want to explore beyond Kazakhstan there are easy routes to the Middle East, Europe and with a little more time available the UK and South East Asia.



## Locations

As Kazakhstan covers such a vast expanse of land, this provides many different places and locations to explore. Beyond the cities there are boundless landscapes and wonders to see. The central hills of the Karaganda and Akmola regions, the higher mountains in the east and the lakes at Almaty and Borovoy are just a small number of the spectacular natural beauties Kazakhstan has to offer. The Caspian Sea in the west and the desert and sand dunes in the south are stark contrasts to the snow capped peaks of Almaty. Providing further opportunities to be awestruck at the diverse and wonderful country Kazakhstan is.

Treks, camping and guided tours can all be booked for these locations and taking a Kazakh or Russian speaker is advised.

## Summary

Kazakhstan is a wonderful country with lovely people and many exciting opportunities. In only a few months I have already fallen in love with this unique country and all that it has to offer.



**Emma Gricmanis**

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