

Azerbaijan (Republic of)

Last updated: 31-01-2004

Location and area

Azerbaijan is a republic in the Transcaucasia region of western Asia, bordered on the north by Russia, on the northwest by Georgia, on the east by the Caspian Sea, on the south by Iran, and on the west by Armenia. The republic includes the regions known under the Soviets as the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) (Naxçivan), which is separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by a mountainous strip in Armenia. Azerbaijan covers an area of about 86,600 km². (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Topography

Azerbaijan is a land of high mountain ranges and low river valleys. The Greater Caucasus Mountains form much of the country's northern border and contain Mount Bazardüzü (4,466 m), the highest elevation in the republic. The tallest mountains of the Lesser Caucasus form the country's southeastern boundary and attain heights of 3,500 m. The Aras-Kura river valleys dominate the central portion of the country. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Climate

With the exception of the Länkaran Lowland in the subtropical southeast and upper elevations in the mountainous zones, the climate is generally arid. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

In the Länkaran Lowland, tea, citrus fruits, and olives are grown. Cotton, grain, grapes, and tobacco are the leading crops elsewhere, although the production of cotton and grapes has fallen considerably in recent years. Large-scale canal systems divert water, primarily for agricultural purposes. Mountain pastures are used for sheep grazing (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Azerbaijan and 7,330 km² of gley soils.

Small peatlands exist in the Caucasus mountains (pers. comm. Jonathan Etzold 2003).