

Almaty is the largest financial, economic and cultural city of Kazakhstan. Almaty was the capital of Kazakhstan from 1929 to 1997. It is one of the most beautiful cities in Kazakhstan with a population of 1,348,500 (as of 1 September 2008), which represents 9% of the population of the country, situated in the foothills of the **Zailisky Alatau Mountains**. It accommodates numerous business centers, theaters, museums, art galleries, exhibition halls and countless modern entertainment complexes. The name “Almaty” derives from the Kazakh word for “apple” (alma), by which the surrounding region is rich; the region that is thought to be the ancestral home of the apple, and the wild *Malus sieversii*, is considered a likely candidate for the ancestor of the modern domestic apple.

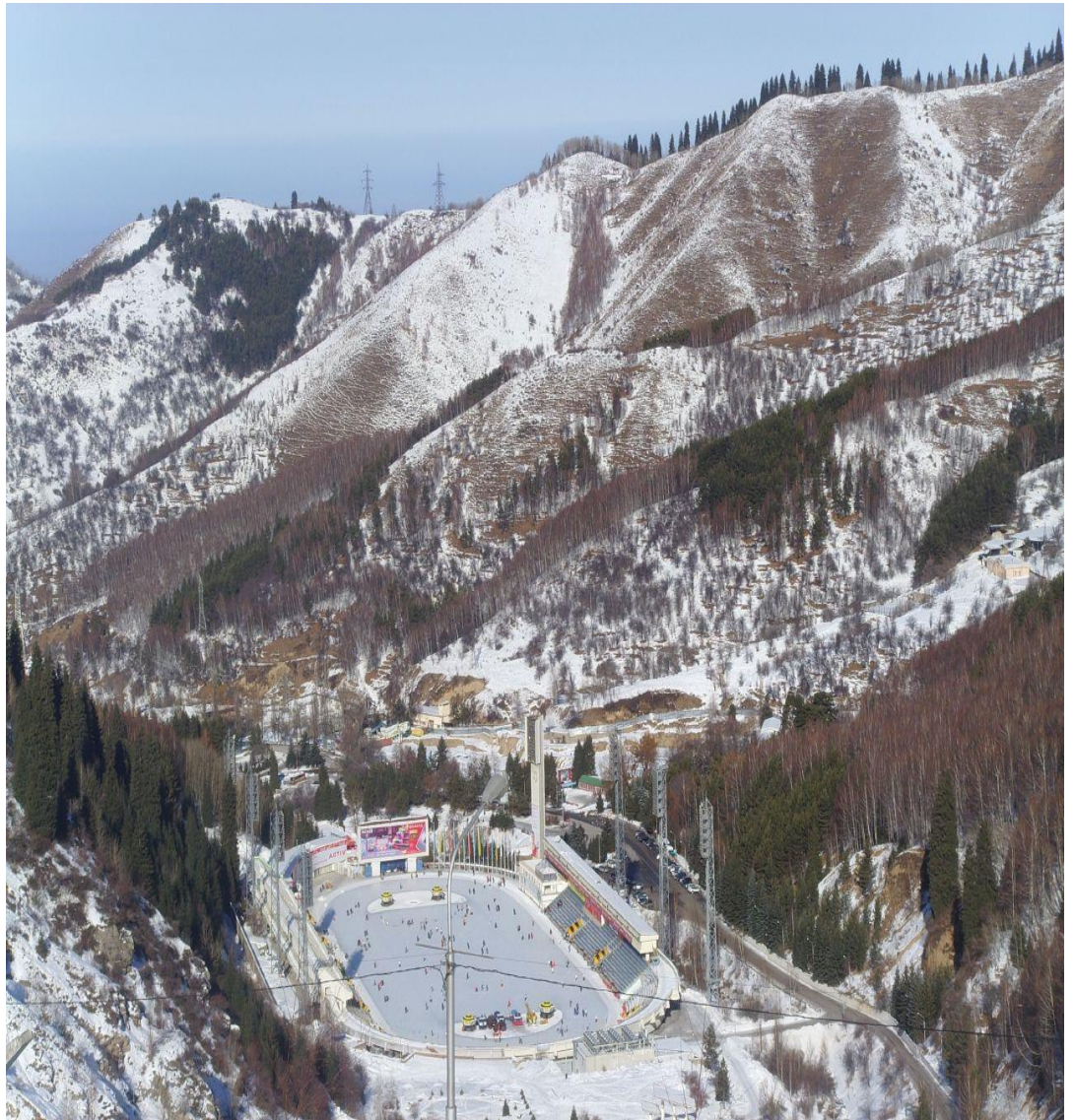
Residents and guests of the southern capital have at their disposal **5 stadiums**, a hippodrome, and the high-altitude **Medeo** sport complex, featuring a unique ice skating rink located at 1700 m above sea level.

This is where world records have been set many times by the world's top skaters. Medeo is a popular skating area for residents and guests of Almaty. Almaty Central Stadium accommodates 32,000 people. Nearby is a venue for track and field athletes and a perfectly equipped winter swimming pool. Mountainous areas the visiting card of Almaty. You can begin your acquaintance with them on a ride by cable car to the city's highest point, **Kok-Tyobe** (Blue Hill), 1130 m above sea level.

From here you can view a splendid panorama of the mountain ranges and the city. It is especially beautiful at night when Almaty is illuminated by glimmering lights. The cableway soars over the old part of the city, buried in gardens called Compote by locals. This area is so called because of the fruit names of streets located here: Cherry, Pear, Grape, etc. While riding the cablecar up the hill you can watch the lifestyle of local people almost as in an ethnographic museum. The Kok-Tyube hillside is topped by a 350 m TV tower. It's built in a seismically active area.

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Saint-Voznesenskiy is an Orthodox Cathedral designed by the local architect A. Zenkov, was built without the use of any nails in 1940 and is one of the nine most unique wooden buildings in the world. Its wall paintings and interior decoration boggle the imagination of the visitors with its beauty and magnificence. The remarkable fact is that the Cathedral outstood a very strong earthquake of 9 points by Richter scale in 1911.

Almaty's biggest recreational area (admission 25T; 24hr), at the eastern end of Gogol, is still known as Gorky Park. It has lakes, funfair rides, an Aquapark (Jun-Sep), a zoo, and several cafés, and shashlyk stands.



Central state Museum of Kazakhstan

It is one of the oldest and largest museum of the Central Asia. It was established in 1831 in Orenburg at military school, In 1929 the museum moved to Almaty . From 1985 the state museum was housed in specially designed building with a total area of 17557 sq. m. The building of the museum was constructed by J.Ratushniy, Z.Mustafina and B.Rzagalieva's projects. The exposition of the museum placed in four exposition halls (a paleontology and archeology hall; anthropology and ethnography of Kazakhstan; Ethnography of the people of Kazakhstan, the Great Patriotic War; Sovereign Kazakhstan) reflects history of the country since the most ancient times up to now. Also thematic exhibitions, festivals, meetings, museum lessons are regularly held here.





The capital
Astana

- The capital is **Astana**.
- **Almaty** is the largest city of the country with a population over 1.5 million.
- Other major cities include **Shymkent**, **Semey**, **Aqtobe** and **Oskemen**.



Almaty
Kazakhstan's
largest city