The Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan won their independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Now they are emerging from the shadow of dominance and are subjects of intense interest from the West. The modern culture and customs of the various peoples in these geopolitical hotspots, straddling the far reaches of Europe into Asia, are revealed to a general audience for the first time. This will be the must-have volume for a broad, authoritative overview of these traditional civilizations as they cope with globalization.

My Personal Review:
The book provides a concise but comprehensive introduction to the cultures and customs of the Central Asia republics - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It opens with a survey of geography, history and language of the region inhabited by more than a hundred nationalities and ethnic groups. The volume covers aspects of culture such diverse as religion, folklore and literature, media and cinema, visual and performing arts and architecture. There is an interesting chapter about practices of dating, marriage, the social status of women and the domination of family values. Finally, readers familiarize themselves with festivals and celebrations such as nawruz and tois. The complementary sections include Chronology which lists the key historical events in the region from the Bronze Age to 2006, Glossary of terms and Selected bibliography for those interested in in-depth study of discussed topics.

The author analyzes the legacy of cultures of settlers and nomads and traces their historical development from ancient empires to the Soviet era and post-Soviet independence. Being concerned with culture and customs, he tactfully refrains from discussing painful issues such as recent excesses of de-Russification in Uzbekistan and other Central Asia republics when
many Russians were deprived of property, forced to immigrate or simply killed. The author tries to be impartial and to show both positive and negative aspects of events in the complex interplay between the power of tradition and dynamics of modernization. However, the sensitive reader can clearly feel his deep love to the people and cultures he writes about.

The book is well-written and easily read. Its tone is balanced and non-polemical. The numerous photographs by the author add a useful visual dimension to his text. The book is an excellent introduction to the rich and diverse cultures of Central Asia civilization and a good starting point for those who want to know more.

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Culture and Customs of the Central Asian Republics (Culture and Customs of Asia) by Rafis Abazov - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!