



How Languages Work

An Introduction to Languages and Linguistics

Edited by Carol Genetti

Language Profile 01

Kabardian

Kabardian

Kabardian, also known as East Circassian, is a member of the Northwest Caucasian Language Family. These languages are indigenous to the Caucasus mountains of Russia. However the majority of speakers live in diasporic communities in Turkey and the Middle East.



Northwest Circassian Languages are native to the regions in color.
Kabardian is native to the circled region.



Circassians were expelled from the Caucasus when the Russians completed their conquest in the 1860s.



Circassian women wore elegant, gown-like dresses for special occasions.



Traditional Circassian women's dress



Traditional Circassian men's dress included a collarless shirt, loose riding pants and a caftan-like coat called Cherkesska.



Traditionally, the Circassian community as whole cemented its relationship in large feasts and dancing.



Traditional Circassian home (wune) in Fındık, Turkey. On the right is the guest room entrance and on the left is the main door.



Circassian breakfast with tea, traditional cheeses, sweet butter and fresh bread.



Black tea in small glasses is a preferred drink for Circassians in all ages.



Today, most fluent Circassian speakers in Turkey are elderly.



Circassian elderly women often wear loosely tied head scarves.



An accordion is a traditional musical instrument in Circassian culture.



Circassian speakers from Findik, Turkey



Circassian elderly are always happy to share their wisdom.

Suggestions for further readings on Circassians

Colarusso, John. 2002. *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus*. Princeton University Press.

In this book you will find the myths and legends of Circassians

Hunt, David. 2012. *Legends of the Caucasus*. Saqi Books.

<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0105>

Kabardian sound files with English and Turkish transcriptions.