

15 DAY EXPLORE AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA & ARMENIA

DESTINATIONS

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TBILISI

BAKU

YEREVAN



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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

Destination	Baku
Meals included	
Accommodation	N/A

Salam eleykim! Welcome to Azerbaijan. On arrival at Baku Airport, you'll be met by a representative and transferred to your hotel (approximately a 40-minute drive). Baku certainly is a city where old meets new – ancient fortified buildings standing next to Russian imperial-style squares and ultra-modern architectural wonders. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm in the evening, where you will meet your local leader and fellow travellers joining you for this adventure. Relax and enjoy a restful evening, with your welcome dinner scheduled for tomorrow evening to allow all travellers to attend.

DAY 2

Destination	Baku
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Get to know Baku with a tour of the city, taking in a visit to the Old City, including time at Shemakha Gate, the Palace of the Shirvanshahs, Maiden Tower and Old Market Square. Be sure to bring your camera as there will be some panoramic views of Baku's varied skyline to enjoy. Afterwards, embark on a tour of the Absheron Peninsula, visiting the Ateshgah Fire Temple, Mardakan Medieval Fortress and the eternally burning Yanar Dag (Fire Mountain). Return to Baku in the evening and enjoy a local dinner with your leader and small group.

DAY 3

Destination	Baku
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

This morning, head out of the city on a day trip to Qobustan, located around 60 kilometres south of Baku. Visit one of the world's largest open-air archaeological museums and wander past ancient rock art dating back some 40,000 years. The prehistoric carvings depict scenes of hunting, fishing and gathering. Return to Baku in the afternoon and finish your day with a visit to the much-loved Carpet Museum located on the waterfront. Afterwards, perhaps continue to walk along the waterfront to find a restaurant for dinner, keeping an eye out for the Baku Eye and Flame Towers that light up the city skyline at night.

DAY 4

Destination	Baku [bus] Sheki
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Leave Baku and head for the Caucasus Mountains in the northwest of Azerbaijan. Watch arid landscapes slowly give way to densely forested mountains. En route to Sheki, there will be stops at an active mud volcano, Diri Baba Mausoleum in Maraza, the Yeddi Gumbaz Mausoleum, and the Juma Mosque in Shemakha. Also, stop in to visit a family to learn traditional yoghurt making methods and enjoy some local snacks. On arrival in Sheki, stop at a local craft workshop where the famous shebeke – stained-glass windows with intricately carved frames – are made by hand. You will also visit the acclaimed Palace of Shaki Khans to see its magnificent frescoes and stained glass. After a long day of driving and activities, enjoy a relaxing night in Sheki.

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DAY 5

Destination	Sheki 🚗 Kvareli
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel and visit the local Sheki bazaar before driving to Lagodeckhi – a town at the Azerbaijan–Georgia border – to meet your Georgian leader and change transportation. From here travel to Georgia's Kakheti region, known for its winemaking. There will be a visit to the Gremi Architectural Complex and its museum, followed by lunch with a local family, which includes delicious homemade cuisine and wine. Discover the importance of bread in the Georgian diet and discover how they bake this staple before continuing to a winery to sample different kinds of the Georgian varietals. There will also be time to listen to unique Georgian polyphonic songs – a traditional style of music prevalent in the Kakheti region. Afterwards, travel to your Feature Stay accommodation in Kvareli – Royal Batoni castle – located in a picturesque area on the banks of Ilia Lake, between the Kvareli Mountains and the Duruji River. Spend time relaxing by the outdoor swimming pool overlooking the lake, or in your elegant room with lake or mountain views.

DAY 6

Destination	Kvareli 🚗 Signaghi 🚗 Tbilisi
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Following breakfast, journey to the beautiful 18th-century town of Signaghi, known for its quaint stone walls, small houses with terracotta roofs and decorated balconies. After some time to admire the picturesque views of Alazani Valley and Great Caucasus Mountains, drive to Tbilisi. Once arrived, wander the old districts of Georgia's capital, which are structured like terraces, and walk through the narrow streets to appreciate the colourful houses, patterned balconies and revamped modern architecture. Get to know the city on a walk beginning from the 13th-century Metekhi Church, with its magnificent views over old Tbilisi, before visiting the main sights of the city. In the afternoon enjoy some free time.

Optional Activities Tbilisi - Anchiskhati Church - Free Tbilisi - Sioni Cathedral - Free

DAY 7

Destination	Tbilisi
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Enjoy panoramic views of the whole town from the ancient Narikala Fortress, then head to the historic domed sulphur bath area. Visit the stunning treasury of the Golden Fund at the Natural History Museum (closed on Mondays), which will prove that Georgia is truly the land of the Golden Fleece. From here, visit a local art studio and become acquainted with Georgian cloisonne enamel – also known as Minanqari – and see how it is made. This afternoon is free for you to continue your independent exploration, so why not treat yourself to a spa treatment at one of the thermal bathhouses around the city? This is a traditional experience, and there are many bathhouses to check out around back in the the Abanotubani area of the city.

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DAY 8

Destination	Tbilisi 🚗 Mtsheta 🚗 Boromi 🚗 Atkaltsikhe
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Today visit Mtskheta – the ancient capital and religious centre of Georgia. Visit World Heritage-listed sites such as the sixth-century Jvari Monastery and the impressive Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, where the Robe of Christ is purported to be buried. Afterwards, visit a wine cellar in the village of Chardakhi and taste unique BIO wines, produced using traditional Georgian methods. Meet the owners of the wine cellar over a delicious lunch and Qvevri wines. In the afternoon, drive to the south-western part of Georgia and visit Borjomi Spa Town, famous for its mineral water Borjomi. Spend the night in Akhaltsikhe, with dinner included at your hotel.

DAY 9

Destination	Akhaltsikhe 🚗 Vardzia 🚗 Akhaltsikhe
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Today, drive to the magnificent cave town of Vardzia, which stretches over half a kilometre along the river Mtkvari and has 19 tiers of winding cobbled streets. There is a church hewn out in rock with amazing 12th-century frescos, and the complex also includes dwellings quarters, small hall-type churches, refectories and wine cellars. En route to Vardzia, you'll also visit the 10th-century Khertvisi Fortress. In the afternoon return to Akhaltsikhe and visit the multicultural complex of Rabat (closed on Mondays). Spend the evening with your group at an included dinner at your hotel.

DAY 10

Destination	Akhaltsikhe 🚗 Uplistsikhe 🚗 Gudauri
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

In the morning visit the town of Gori, home to the Stalin Museum, and historic Uplistsikhe Cave Town. Uplistsikhe was a stop on the Great Silk Road, and is a fascinating complex with dwelling quarters, wine cellars, bakeries, a three-nave basilica church hewn out in rock and even a theatre! Afterwards, drive up the renowned Georgian Military Highway, which eventually leads to the Georgia–Russia border. On the way, you'll visit the Ananuri architectural complex – two churches and a fortress that overlook the Zhinvali water reservoir. The carvings on the churches are one of the best surviving examples of Georgian art. Enjoy a scenic drive through the Caucasus Mountains, and arrive at your hotel in Gudauri. Dinner is included at your hotel this evening.

We recommend wearing sturdy shoes for today's activity. Steep weathered stairs, sandy platforms and narrow tunnels at this site mean you need to watch your footing. Access to the monastery is by way of a 15-minute walk that is a steep incline. There are local buses available that make this journey which costs GEL 1.

DAY 11

Destination	Gudauri
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Enjoy a stunning drive from Gudauri along the Tergi River before arriving in Kazbegi. From here, take the mountain road to Gergeti Trinity Church, located at 2170 metres above sea level. Weather depending, you may catch a glimpse of

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Mt Kazbegi – one of the highest glaciers in the Caucasus. Better yet, it may be possible to return part of the way by cable car – your driver can drop you at the station in Kobi and you can travel the 7.5 kilometres to Gudauri in a gondola for a bird's eye view of this landscape. Return to Gudauri this afternoon for time to relax in your hotel. This is the perfect opportunity to enjoy the mountain air and views. Your hotel has many facilities including a bowling alley and a wellness centre, and dinner this evening is included at the hotel.

DAY 12

Destination	Gudauri 🚗 Dilijan
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Enjoy a final breakfast in Gudauri before driving to Sadakhlo – a village at the Georgia–Armenia border. Here, your group will change leaders and transportation. Begin the Armenian leg of your adventure with a visit to Haghpat Monastery, listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site. Haghpat stands as an example of one of the most outstanding works of medieval Armenian architecture. Continue on to the picturesque resort town of Dilijan, often referred to as the 'Little Switzerland of Armenia'. Dilijan's central Sharambeyan Street has been preserved and maintained as a charming old town, complete with craftsman's workshops, a gallery and a museum. Stay overnight at a hotel in Dilijan.

DAY 13

Destination	Dilijan 🚗 Yerevan
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

After breakfast, drive to the reflective waters of Lake Sevan, nicknamed 'The Pearl of Armenia'. Sevan is one of the largest fresh-water high-altitude lakes in the world. Visit Sevanavank Monastery, which overlooks the water on the Peninsula. Move on to the village of Garni to visit the first century Garni Temple, built by the Armenian King Tiridates and dedicated to Mithra, the God of the Sun. Be treated to a local performance in the temple the magnificent sounds of the Duduk – a flute-like instrument originating to Armenia, and currently listed on the UNESCO intangible Cultural Heritage List. Travel northeast of Garni, higher up the gorge of the Azat River, to the magnificent Geghard Monastery. This World Heritage-listed site is partly carved out of a mountain and surrounded by cliffs. In the afternoon, drive to Armenia's capital – Yerevan. Stay overnight at a hotel in Yerevan.

DAY 14

Destination	Yerevan
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

After breakfast, become familiar with the streets of Yerevan on a leader-led city tour. Established in 782 BC, Armenia's capital is one of the oldest cities in the world. Nowadays, the city's liveliness comes from its ancient culture mixed with a modern lifestyle. Visit the Matenadaran – home to ancient manuscripts that contain historical documents from all over Europe and Asia. The building also holds the first copy of the Bible in Armenian. In the afternoon, depart for Zvartnots Temple – a stunning example of seventh-century Armenian architecture. Return to the capital in the afternoon to discover Armenian Carpet Making and learn about the weaving process and to swing past the local fruit market before returning to your hotel for the night.

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DAY 15

Destination	Yerevan
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Today your adventure comes to an end after breakfast. There are no activities included on this day and you are free to leave at any time.

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Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

14 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 6 dinners
Expert tour leader
Private Bus
Hotel (13 nights), Royal Batoni (Feature Stay 1 night)
In depth Sightseeing

Fine Print

EXCLUSIONS

International Airfares
Personal Expenses
Travel Insurance
Optional activities
Anything not mentioned in the itinerary or optional
Tipping/Gratuities

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accommodation
The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, however, any changes are beyond our control.

Single Supplement
A single supplement is available on all nights of this trip from an extra AUD \$1010 subject to availability.

Triple Share
Not available.

Children
Children must be 5 years old or over and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

Tour Documentation
Final documentation will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

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OPTIONAL TOURS	<p>Optional Activities</p> <p>Tbilisi - Anchiskhati Church - Free</p> <p>Tbilisi - Sioni Cathedral - Free</p> <p>Booked locally with your Tour Leader directly.</p>
HOTEL LIST	<p>Baku: City Park Hotel or similar</p> <p>Sheki: Sheki Palace Hotel or similar</p> <p>Kvareli: Royal Batoni or similar</p> <p>Tbilisi: Citadines City Centre Tbilisi or similar</p> <p>Akhaltzikhe: Hotel Lomsia or similiar</p> <p>Gudauri: Marco Polo Hotel or similar</p> <p>Dilijan: Best Western Paradise or similar</p> <p>Yerevan: Ani Plaza Hotel or similar</p>
HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS	<p>Deposit & Payments</p> <p>Book now and secure your package with only a AUD \$400 deposit per person.</p> <p>Pay a 2nd instalment of AUD \$1115 per person within 28 days.</p> <p>You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.</p> <p>Booking Process</p> <p>Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)</p> <p>Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected</p> <p>Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests</p> <p>Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab</p> <p>Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment. You may also pay via BPAY (not available within 70 days of departure)</p> <p>Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking</p> <p>Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!</p>

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