

12 DAY GORGEOUS GEORGIA, AZERBAIJAN & ARMENIA

DESTINATIONS

—

TBILISI

KAKHETI

BAKU

YEREVAN

SHEKI



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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

Destination	Home ✈ Yerevan
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Ani Plaza Hotel, or similar

Welcome to Armenia! You'll be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel in Yerevan.

The rest of the day is free for you to relax or explore Armenia's capital. Dating back to the 8th century, it's one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world.

Please note: Some flights may depart the day before.

Check in: Passengers will be arriving at various times throughout the day from as early as 6am through to late evening. If arriving prior to standard check-in time, which is generally 3pm local time, you are welcome to leave your luggage with hotel reception and explore your surroundings until check-in becomes available, as there are generally no scheduled activities on Day 1 of the itinerary. The hotel may grant early check-in, however this is strictly subject to availability and at the hotels discretion.

DAY 2

Destination	Yerevan
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Ani Plaza Hotel, or similar

At midday we'll take a city tour of Yerevan, known as the 'Pink City' thanks to its pink stone buildings. We'll visit the Mother Armenia monument that overlooks the city with a spectacular panoramic view of Yerevan and Mount Ararat.

Yerevan is a compact city. We'll visit the Matenadaran (Institute of Ancient Manuscripts) and take a tour of the Cascade complex, a massive staircase in the city centre. It has eight levels and offers beautiful city views as you ascend. Don't worry if it seems daunting – there is an escalator!

We'll see the Yerevan Opera Theatre, as well as the busy, pedestrian-friendly Northern Avenue and grand Republic Square. Republic Square, home to its well-known musical fountains, is a great place to people watch as the locals go about their day.

We'll visit Tsitsernakaberd, the Armenian Genocide memorial complex, honouring the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide carried out by the Ottomans in 1915. There is an eternal flame and an arrow-shaped stele of granite, 44 metres high reaching to the sky, symbolising the survival and spiritual rebirth of the Armenian people.

We'll stop at the Vernissage market for souvenirs and gifts and the shuka (market) to buy traditional sweets or dried fruit.

DAY 3

Destination	Yerevan 🚌 Khor Virap 🚌 Echmiadzin 🚌 Garni 🚌 Yerevan
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Ani Plaza Hotel, or similar

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We'll head first to iconic Khor Virap monastery, with the breathtaking backdrop of unmistakable Mount Ararat. It's the birthplace of Christianity in Armenia and an important pilgrimage site for Armenians. From the monastery it is possible to see four countries at once: Armenia, Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan.

We'll then head to Echmiadzin, the spiritual and administrative centre of the Armenian Apostolic Church. We'll visit its mother church, Echmiadzin Cathedral, and attend the Holy Liturgy.

We'll visit the first-century Temple of Garni, the only surviving Greco-Roman structure in Armenia. This pagan temple is a rare glimpse into pre-Christian Caucasia.

We'll then visit one of the most beautiful monasteries in Armenia, the 13th-century medieval monastery of Geghard. This UNESCO World Heritage Site consists of a number of churches and tombs, many cut directly into the mountain rock face.

On our way back to Yerevan, we'll visit the ruins of Zvartnots Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Unusually circular in design, it's a superb example of medieval Armenian architecture.

DAY 4

Destination	Yerevan 🚗 Lake Sevan 🚗 Dilijan 🚗 Tbilisi
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Gallery Palace, or similar

This morning we'll head to Lake Sevan. You'll visit the ancient, well-preserved Sevanavank Monastery, on the narrow Sevan Peninsula. The complex has brilliant views over the sparkling blue lake, a popular beach destination.

We'll continue to Dilijan, a resort town renowned for its charming nature and extraordinary architecture. The surroundings are picturesque; with the densely forested valleys and mountains with alpine meadows, it's little wonder this area is referred to as 'Armenian Switzerland'. We'll see the town's historic centre, Sharambeyan Street, lined with traditional houses and artisan workshops.

We'll then drive to the Armenia-Georgia border and after border formalities, drive to Tbilisi.

Welcome to Georgia! This small, beautiful country at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains offers natural beauty and lush landscapes everywhere you go. It's known for good food and wine, welcoming locals and stunning historic attractions.

Its capital Tbilisi, a heady blend of east and west, was founded in the fifth century during the Iberian Empire. It's home to nearly half of the country's population. Enjoy the lively, charming atmosphere as you stroll the maze-like, cobblestone streets and admire the old churches.

DAY 5

Destination	Tbilisi 🚗 Ananuri 🚗 Gudauri 🚗 Stepantsminda 🚗 Tbilisi
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Hotel	4 ★ Gallery Palace, or similar

We'll drive through the Caucasus Mountains, making a stop on the banks of the Zhinvali water reservoir and then visiting Ananuri Castle. This medieval monument was built by the Dukes of Aragvi, with its earliest parts dating from the 13th century.

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We'll continue upwards to the alpine ski resort of Gudauri. Then we'll follow the old Georgian Military Road through the Jvari Pass (Cross Pass). The Georgian Military Road is an incredibly scenic adventure, steeped in history and legend. We'll arrive in Stepantsminda to enjoy the view from Gergeti Trinity Church.

Perched on top of a steep mountain at an elevation of 2,170 metres, its isolated beauty surrounded by towering snowy peaks makes it an icon of Georgia. It overlooks the small village of Stepantsminda.

After an authentic lunch with a local family, we'll return to our hotel.

DAY 6

Destination	Tbilisi 🚗 Signagi 🚗 Kakheti 🚗 Telavi
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Savaneti Eco Hotel, or similar

Today we'll head to the Kakheti region. We'll drive through the gorgeous Georgian countryside to the fortified city of Signagi, surrounded by the remnants of the 18th-century city walls with 28 watchtowers.

We'll visit the Bodbe Monastery, the final resting place of St. Nino. It's an important religious site overlooking the Alazani Valley and offers spectacular views of the Greater Caucasus mountains and wine country.

The ancient wine-growing region Kakheti is the biggest in the country. Georgia has a long history of viticulture, although the oldest winery in the world can be found in neighbouring Armenia.

Georgia's traditional, ancient qvevri wine-making method is inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. After Bodbe, we'll head to the tunnel winery at Khareba to taste Kakhetian wines made here according to local traditions.

We'll continue to Telavi, stopping to visit the 16th-century Gremi fortress on the way. Telavi is one of the oldest cities in Georgia, inhabited since the Bronze Age. We'll visit the Old Town.

DAY 7

Destination	Telavi 🚗 Alaverdi 🚗 Tsinandali 🚗 Shuamta 🚗 Tbilisi
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Gallery Palace, or similar

After a visit to the Telavi food market, we'll head to Alaverdi Cathedral. Built in the early 11th century, it's one of the four great cathedrals of this country and in a beautiful setting, dominating the landscape against the backdrop of the Caucasus Mountains.

Then we'll visit beautiful Tsinandali Estate, the place where Georgian wine was first bottled. Prince Alexander Chavchavadze was a poet and prominent figure in Georgia, as well as creator of modern Georgian winemaking. In his home here you'll find an art gallery and a bar, where you can try Tsinandali, the first Georgian wine produced in accordance with European methods. Ancient qvevri tradition and classical European winemaking still coexist here.

We'll continue to the Academy of Ikalto, and the Shuamta Monastery Complex, before heading back to Tbilisi via beautiful Gombori Pass.

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DAY 8

Destination	Tbilisi 🚌 Lagodekhi 🚌 Sheki
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Sheki Palace Hotel, or similar

We'll head to Lagodekhi to cross the border into Azerbaijan. You'll meet your Azeri guide and start exploring Azerbaijan, 'The Land of Fire'.

Azerbaijan is a somewhat chaotic, eclectic mix of cultures. Like the rest of the Caucasus, it's fascinating given its geography and history – previously part of the Russian empire and then the Soviet Union.

On our way to Sheki, we'll visit the first Albanian church in Caucasus, in the village of Kish. It dates back to first century AD.

We'll continue on to Sheki, one of the most ancient cities in Azerbaijan. The city is inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List given its rich history as a stop on the fabled Silk Road.

We'll enjoy a short sightseeing tour on arrival. The city is known for its traditional crafts and folk art. We'll visit a handicrafts workshop and a local bazaar. We'll also visit a local mosque and madrasa.

We'll visit the medieval fortress and of course, visit the opulent Sheki Khans' Palace, an architectural delight. Built in the late 18th century, it's been meticulously restored with its elaborate frescoes, Iranian mirror work and Ottoman ceramics. The facade is largely covered by shebeke artistry, a mosaic of multicoloured glass set in a wooden lattice. Examples of this traditional artistry can be found throughout Sheki.

DAY 9

Destination	Sheki 🚌 Shamakhi 🚌 Baku
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Central Park Hotel, or similar

On the way to Baku, we'll visit the historical Juma Mosque, considered one of Azerbaijan's most ancient mosques. We'll stop and see the Yeddi Gumbez Mausoleum (Seven Domes of Shamakhi), a cemetery located near the town of Shamakhi. It's the Shirvan Shah's family graveyard.

When we arrive in Baku, enjoy a night tour by bus with your expert local guide. It's an interesting city of contrasts, from the medieval 12th-century Inner City (Icheri Sheher), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to the modern skyscrapers. The Flame Towers are an interesting sight; three towers built to resemble fire that glow over the city – at night they light up and alternate between the colours of the nation's flag and the colour of fire.

DAY 10

Destination	Baku 🚌 Gobustan 🚌 Surakhani 🚌 Baku
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	4 ★ Central Park Hotel, or similar

Today we'll explore Greater Baku and the Absheron Peninsula.

We'll start with Gobustan National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that's home to fascinating ancient rock art.

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We'll visit the Petroglyph Museum, with 12 rooms of displays exploring the significance of the history of Gobustan petroglyphs. We'll continue to the mud volcanoes in Gobustan Reserve – half of the world's mud volcanoes are located in Azerbaijan, concentrated in this national park along the coast of the Caspian Sea.

Later we'll drive to the Baku Ateshgah, a temple of fire worship located in the town of Surakhani. This area is famous as oil oozes naturally from the ground and flames burn perpetually – our next stop is Yanar Dag Mountain (Burning Mountain). It's no wonder Azerbaijan is known as 'The Land of Fire'!

DAY 11

Destination	Baku ✈ Home
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	N/A

Enjoy one last delicious breakfast this morning, before your Caucasus adventure comes to an end. Later you will be transferred to the airport to board your flight home.

We hope you've enjoyed this extraordinary journey.

Check out: Passengers will be departing at various times throughout the day. Standard hotel check-out times will apply no matter what time your flight is scheduled to depart. Check-out time is generally anywhere from 10am-12pm. You are welcome to leave your luggage at hotel reception and spend your final moments of free time exploring the area or alternatively please speak with hotel staff if you would like to extend your check-out time. Please note this service is subject to availability and will likely come at an additional cost. Your tour guide (or hotel staff) will confirm the time of your airport transfer with you directly.

DAY 12

Destination	Home
Meals included	
Hotel	N/A

Arrive home today. We hope you've been *inspired*.

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TOUR ITINERARY

Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return international airfares with a full-service airline
- Arrival and departure transfers with guide assistance
- 10 nights in comfortable 4-star accommodation
- All Transportation - small coach
- Activities indicated in the itinerary
- Meals: Breakfast daily, 1 lunch
- 2-14 people: 1 English speaking tour leader – Will accompany the group throughout
- All accommodation as listed
- All entrance fees to the sites listed (except optionals)
- All activities listed in the itinerary unless a paid optional
- Comfortable, dedicated private transportation throughout
- 24/7 customer service and your own Dedicated Support Agent

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TOUR ITINERARY

SIGHTSEEING HIGHLIGHTS

- Yerevan – Tour the sights of Armenia’s capital, including the iconic Cascade staircase and the Armenian Genocide memorial complex
- Khor Virap – Visit the birthplace of Christianity in Armenia
- Etchmiadzin – See the mother church of the Armenian Apostolic Church
- Etchmiadzin – Witness the Zvartnots Temple, one of the brightest landmarks of medieval Armenian architecture
- Garni – Visit the first-century Temple of Garni for a rare glimpse into pre-Christian Caucasia
- Geghard – See this beautiful 13th-century medieval monastery cut into the mountain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Lake Sevan – Take in the views of this sparkling blue lake from Sevanavank Monastery
- Dilijan – Wander the historical district of the old town in this charming resort town
- Tbilisi – Drive through the breathtaking Caucasus Mountains and see the 13th-century Ananuri Castle
- Gergeti – Reach the top of a steep mountain to take in the isolated beauty of Gergeti Trinity Church
- Gergeti – Enjoy lunch with a hospitable local family
- Signagi – See this fortified city with its 18th-century walls and 28 watchtowers
- Kahketi – Get a taste of Georgia’s renowned wine country, with its ancient history of viticulture and tradition
- Sheki – Take a tour of this fascinating ancient city, including the opulent Sheki Khans’ Palace
- Shamakhi – Visit historic Juma Mosque and the Yeddi Gumbez Mausoleum
- Baku – Take a city tour at night to appreciate the dramatic, modern skyscrapers that define the Baku skyline
- Gobustan – Discover the celebrated petroglyphs and mud volcanoes in Gobustan Reserve
- Surakhani – Visit the temple of fire worship and the natural phenomenon of Yanar Dag Mountain (Burning Mountain)

Fine Print

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HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS

Deposit & Payments

- Book now and secure your package with only a \$100 deposit per person.
- Pay a 2nd instalment of \$2,600 per person within 28 days.
- You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.

Booking Process

- Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)
- Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected
- Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests
- Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab
- Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment
- Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking
- Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!
- You will then be allocated and contacted by one of our Dedicated Support Agent's (within 48 hours) who will support you right up until you return from your journey

FLIGHTS, UPGRADES & EXTENSIONS

Airfare Information

- Full-service airline used will be Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific, China Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, ANA Airlines, JAL Airlines or similar
- Flights are not direct and include a maximum of two connections
- If you would like to travel with a preferred airline, please ensure you mention this in the special request field. Please note that appropriate fare and tax difference will be applicable in order to confirm your request.
- All tickets will include 20 kilos checked baggage per person, along with 7 kilos of hand luggage.
- Despite the airlines baggage allowance, we recommend travelling with 20 kilos per person due to restrictions with internal flights (where applicable), as well as coach and train

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transportation. Also, you will be responsible for handling your luggage at all times as the services of porters is not included. If travelling over this amount, you will be liable for any excess baggage fees enforced by the airline, payable direct.

- Once ticketed, flights are non-refundable; any changes will be subject to the airline rules and change fees
- Full names as per passport (including all middle names) are required
- Any airline schedule changes or cancellations are beyond our control
- Any airline 'extras' such as pre-allocated seating are at your own arrangement (additional charges apply)

Premium Economy or Business Class upgrades

- Premium Economy - not available.
- Business Class available from an additional \$6,500 per person (subject to availability).

Please specify this as a 'Special Request' when completing your booking and you will be quoted for the additional fare. In the event your selection is unavailable, or that you are dissatisfied with the quote, you will be provided with a full refund.

Land Only discount

A reduction of \$2,200 per person applies if you wish to arrange your own airfares. To purchase a land-only fare, please select this option in the booking process under 'Departure City'.

Please note, if you are not arriving or departing as per the group itinerary, airport transfers are also no longer included. If you would like us to arrange this service for you, please refer to the 'Extra services' section for pricing.

Extending Your Stay

Some customers like to enhance their holiday by extending their stay pre- and/or post-tour or including a stopover in another destination. If you wish to do so, please follow these steps:

1. Once you have logged in to your account, click on 'Book Now' and complete the required fields until you reach the 'Special Requests' free text field.
2. Here, please specify your preferred flight arrangements and/or preferred airline. Be sure to mention if you would like us to also quote additional nights' accommodation, with the number of nights needed.

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3. After finalising your purchase by processing your deposit payment, please proceed to submit your booking form with all traveller details. Your booking will then be assigned to your Dedicated Support Agent who will be in contact with you via email to verify your request.

By choosing to extend your stay, please note that a supplement of \$150 per person, plus applicable fare and tax differences will apply. We will contact you via email with a quote and proposed flight itinerary, and then proceed with collecting the additional payment required to confirm your request.

EXTRA SERVICES

You can enhance your holiday by arriving or departing before or after the tour, adding a stopover package en-route or booking a tour extension. On this tour you can choose from the following options:

Pre and post tour accommodation

- Pre-tour accommodation (Yerevan): \$140 per room per night for double/twin/single including breakfast and transfer
- Post-tour accommodation (Baku): \$140 per room per night for double/twin/single including breakfast and transfer

Arrival and departure airport transfers

- Arrival/departure Transfers: No extra charge

Please specify in the 'Special Request' field when making your purchase your preferred travel arrangements and if you would like our team to book additional nights' accommodation and/or airport transfers. The additional cost for these land arrangements will be added to your final payment invoice and are subject to availability.

Please note, the transfers are not private and you may be grouped with other Inspiring Vacations customers.

EXCLUSIONS

- Visas
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Tipping
- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional activities
- Personal expenses

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Fitness Requirements

While the tour itinerary should give you some guidance and overview to the expected requirements, to determine if this tour is right for you we categorise each of our tours in terms of their intensity. These guidelines are to ensure that each tour group is conducted as expected and to ensure the overall satisfaction of all Inspiring Vacations customers.

As a general rule, portage is not included, therefore at all times you are expected to handle your own luggage where help may not be available.

This particular tour is categorised as a "3".

3 – Moderate Tour: A good level of fitness and mobility is required, as this tour includes a moderate level of physical activity and is considered a medium-fast paced tour. You should be able to walk up and down stairs, get on and off the coach and able to walk reasonable distances of approximately 2 kilometres per day or more with ease. Any physical ailments you may have must be disclosed at the time of booking to determine your suitability. If you have any form of walking aids, other than a walking stick or hiking poles, then this tour is not suitable.

Tipping

A friendly reminder that tipping is not included in your package. While tipping is not customary, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations. You may also consider tipping your tour leader and driver for outstanding service throughout your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

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

Single supplement is \$1,821 per person in addition to the twin-share price.

Triple Share

Not available.

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Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is required to protect yourself against the unexpected.

Visa & Passport information

It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure they have a valid passport. The passport must be valid for a minimum of six months from the intended date of return.

A visa is required for travel to Azerbaijan for New Zealand passport holders. Please check [HERE](#) for further information.

A visa is not required for travel to Georgia or Armenia for New Zealand passport holders.

Please note that these details are subject to change without notice. We recommend visiting <https://safetravel.govt.nz/> for up to date information in terms of entry requirements. Visas should not be applied for before receiving final documentation.

Tour Documentation

Final documentation including, e-tickets and hotel details, will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

Group Size

2 - 14 people

Trip Style - Group Tour

Our Group Tours offer unparalleled value for money and are the perfect style of travel for those on a budget, though still eager to pack as much in to their itinerary as possible. These tours tick all the boxes with an abundance of inclusions such as sightseeing highlights, expert tour guides, quality accommodation, transfers, coach transportation, some meals and more. Please note that the maximum group size will vary between deals and will be mentioned within the Fine Print of each deal page.

Children

Children must be 11 years old or above and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

Tour Length

The total length of the tour in days includes time spent inflight and is subject to change, depending on the flight schedule. Please refer to the day-by-day itinerary for the time spent

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