

# TOUR DOSSIER ASPIRATIONAL TRAVEL TO GEORGIA, ARMENIA & AZERBAIJAN

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# Discover Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia: from the Caspian to the CT-09 Highlands - 16 Days



Embark on an unforgettable journey through the diverse landscapes and cultures of the South Caucasus. Starting from the shores of the Caspian Sea in Azerbaijan, explore the modern energy of Baku, the ancient Silk Road city of Sheki, and the breathtaking mountain villages. Cross into Georgia to experience its renowned hospitality, vibrant capital Tbilisi, and stunning wine region of Kakheti. Finally, venture into Armenia, the land of ancient monasteries, dramatic highland scenery, and the rich history of Yerevan. This 16-day adventure blends history, nature, and traditions, offering an in-depth exploration of three fascinating countries.

**Note**: We offer two similar itineraries, differing only in the tour direction. You can view the itinerary in the opposite direction by following the <u>link</u>.

#### **DEPARTURE DATES:**

09.05.2025; 16.05.2025; 23.05.2025; 30.05.2025; 06.06.2025; 13.06.2025; 20.06.2025; 27.06.2025; 04.07.2025; 11.07.2025; 18.07.2025; 25.07.2025; 01.08.2025; 08.08.2025; 15.08.2025; 22.08.2025; 29.08.2025; 05.09.2025; 12.09.2025; 19.09.2025; 26.09.2025; 03.10.2025; 10.10.2025; 17.10.2025; 24.10.2025; 31.10.2025; 07.11.2025; 14.11.2025; 21.11.2025; 28.11.2025; 05.12.2025; 12.12.2025; 19.12.2025.

#### **ITINERARY**

#### Day 1 - Baku

Welcome to Azerbaijan! Upon arrival at Baku Heydar Aliyev International Airport, our representative will meet you and arrange a comfortable transfer to your hotel. After check-in, you'll have the rest of the day free to relax after your flight or take a short walk around the city at your leisure. Overnight in Baku. (D)

# Day 2 - Baku

Today, explore Baku, a city where ancient heritage blends with modernity. Begin your guided tour in the Old City (Icherisheher), a UNESCO-listed site with narrow streets, historic caravanserais, and iconic landmarks such as the Maiden Tower and the Palace of the Shirvanshahs. Walk along the seaside boulevard and admire the Flame Towers, one of the city's most striking modern landmarks. Visit the Heydar Aliyev Centre, an architectural masterpiece designed by Zaha Hadid. Enjoy dinner at a traditional Azerbaijani restaurant, where you can taste local specialties like plov and dolma. Overnight in Baku. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 3 - Baku - Gobustan - Yanar Dag - Baku

After breakfast, we leave the capital behind to explore the fascinating Gobustan region. This UNESCO-listed archaeological reserve is home to thousands of ancient petroglyphs, offering a glimpse into prehistoric life in the Caucasus. As we walk among these remarkable carvings, we'll uncover stories of early human settlements, hunting scenes, and religious rituals etched into the rocks thousands of years ago. Gobustan is also famous for its extraordinary landscape dotted with nearly 300 mud volcanoes. These bubbling, gurgling formations create an otherworldly scene, with thick mud occasionally erupting like geysers. Some believe the mineral-rich mud has healing properties, making this natural wonder even more intriguing. After lunch, we continue to Yanar Dag, or the "Burning Mountain," where flames have been rising from the hillside for decades due to natural gas escaping through the earth's surface. This eternal fire, burning continuously since the 1950s, creates a mesmerizing sight, especially as dusk falls. After taking in this rare natural phenomenon, we return to Baku for our final evening in Azerbaijan. Overnight in Baku (Breakfast, Dinner).

# Day 4 - Baku - Shamakhi - Sheki

Depart from Baku and travel towards Sheki, one of Azerbaijan's most charming cities. On the way, stop in Shamakhi, an important historical centre of the Shirvan region, to visit the Juma Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in the Caucasus. Arrive in Sheki and explore its picturesque streets before visiting the stunning Sheki Khan's Palace, known for its intricate frescoes and stained-glass windows. Wander through the lively bazaar, where you can taste Sheki's famous sweets, including Sheki halva. Overnight in Sheki. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 5 - Sheki - Georgian border - Signaghi

In the morning, visit the Church of Kish, one of the oldest Christian sites in the region. Afterward, head to the

Azerbaijani-Georgian border, where you will meet your Georgian guide. Continue to Signaghi, the "City of Love," a beautifully restored town with cobbled streets and breathtaking views of the Alazani Valley. Visit the Bodbe Monastery, the final resting place of Saint Nino, the evangelizer of Georgia. Enjoy the relaxed ambiance of this picturesque town. Overnight in Signaghi. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 6 - Signaghi - Gremi - Napareuli - Alaverdy - Gombori - Tbilisi

Start the day with a walking tour of Signaghi before heading to the Gremi Fortress, the former residence of Kakhetian kings. Continue to Napareuli, where you will visit the Twins Wine Cellar and enjoy a wine-tasting session, learning about Georgia's 8,000-year-old winemaking tradition. Stop at Alaverdi Monastery, an ancient religious site with its own vineyard. Arrive in Tbilisi in the evening and check into your hotel. Overnight in Tbilisi. (Breakfast, Dinner)

## Day 7 - Tbilisi

Explore Georgia's vibrant capital with a guided city tour. Visit the Old Town, where you will see Metekhi Church, the famous sulfur baths, and the 4th-century Narikala Fortress, offering panoramic views of the city. Walk through Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi's cultural hub, and visit the Peace Bridge, a modern architectural highlight. In the evening, enjoy a gala dinner with a traditional Georgian folk performance. Overnight in Tbilisi. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 8 - Tbilisi - Mtskheta - Gori - Uplistikhe - Kutaisi

Travel to Mtskheta, Georgia's ancient capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit Jvari Church, a striking example of early medieval architecture perched on a hilltop, offering panoramic views of the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi rivers. Explore Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, one of Georgia's most revered religious sites, believed to house the burial robe of Christ. Continue to Gori, the birthplace of Joseph Stalin, and tour the Stalin Museum, which showcases his personal belongings, childhood home, and bulletproof train carriage. Later, visit Uplistsikhe, an ancient rock-hewn town that was once a major Silk Road settlement. This fascinating complex features tunnels, dwellings, and temples carved directly into the rock, offering a glimpse into Georgia's distant past. In the late afternoon, we depart for Kutaisi, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Europe. Before settling in for the night, we visit Prometheus Cave, a breathtaking underground wonder filled with dramatic stalactites, stalagmites, and subterranean rivers. The illuminated chambers create a magical atmosphere, making this visit a perfect way to end the day. Overnight in Kutaisi. (Breakfast, Dinner)

#### Day 9 - Kutaisi - Akhaltsikhe

Start your day at Kutaisi's lively local market, where you can experience the vibrant exchange of fresh produce and local goods. Then, visit Bagrati Cathedral, a symbol of Georgia's unification, offering stunning views of the city. Next, head to Gelati Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its medieval academy and beautiful frescoes, reflecting Georgia's religious and intellectual history. In the afternoon, travel to Akhaltsikhe, a historic town in southwestern Georgia, rich in culture and heritage. Enjoy a night in this charming town, with its impressive fortress and welcoming atmosphere. (Breakfast, Dinner)

## Day 10 - Akhaltsikhe - Vardzia - Armenian border - Gyumri

Visit Rabati Fortress, an impressive medieval complex that reflects various cultural influences. Continue to Vardzia, a spectacular cave monastery carved into the mountainside during the 12th century. Afterward, cross the border into Armenia, where you will meet your Armenian guide and travel to Gyumri, Armenia's second-largest city known for its artistic heritage. Overnight in Gyumri. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 11 - Gyumri - Yerevan

Explore the charming city of Gyumri, known for its beautiful architecture and artistic culture. Visit the Dzitoghtsyan Museum of Social Life and National Architecture, as well as the historic Iron Fountain and Sev Berd (Black Fortress). In the afternoon, travel to Yerevan, Armenia's capital. Overnight in Yerevan. (Breakfast, Dinner)

#### Day 12 - Yerevan - Echmiatsin - Zvartnots - Yerevan

Begin the day at the Yerevan Cascade, an iconic landmark with grand staircases and escalators leading to breathtaking panoramic views of the city and Mount Ararat. Continue to Republic Square, known for its charming singing fountains, before exploring the bustling Vernissage market, where vendors offer everything from antiques to locally-made crafts. Next, visit the Matenadaran, a renowned repository of ancient manuscripts, preserving Armenia's rich literary heritage. A solemn stop at the Genocide Memorial follows, honouring the victims of the Armenian Genocide. In the afternoon, explore the 7th-century ruins of Zvartnots Cathedral before visiting the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the spiritual heart of the Armenian Church. Return to Yerevan for a traditional Armenian dinner. Overnight in Yerevan. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 13 - Yerevan - Garni - Geghard - Yerevan

Start the day at the Temple of Garni, the only surviving Greco-Roman colonnaded temple in the Caucasus, perched above the Azat River Gorge. Then, walk through the Symphony of Stones, a striking basalt rock formation resembling organ pipes. Continue to Geghard Monastery, a 13th-century UNESCO-listed complex partially carved into the cliffs, renowned for its intricate stonework and sacred spring. Before returning to Yerevan, take part in a traditional lavash bread-making masterclass, learning the art of baking this Armenian staple in a tonir oven. Enjoy a traditional dinner in Yerevan. Overnight in Yerevan. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 14 - Yerevan - Khor Virap - Noravank - Areni - Yerevan

Travel to Khor Virap Monastery, a historic site offering stunning views of Mount Ararat. Learn about its significance as the place where Saint Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned before converting Armenia to Christianity. Continue to Noravank Monastery, a breathtaking 13th-century complex set against dramatic red cliffs. Admire its intricate carvings and unique two-story church while soaking in the surrounding landscape. Next, visit Areni, Armenia's renowned wine region, and enjoy a tasting session featuring local varieties, including the famous Areni red. Nearby, explore Birds' Cave (Areni-1 Cave), an important archaeological site where the world's oldest leather shoe and evidence of ancient winemaking were discovered. Return to Yerevan for a traditional Armenian dinner. Overnight in Yerevan. (Breakfast, Dinner)

# Day 15 - Yerevan - Sevan - Dilijan - Haghpat - Yerevan

Travel to Lake Sevan, the "Pearl of Armenia," one of the world's largest high-altitude lakes. Visit Sevanavank Monastery, perched on a peninsula, offering stunning views of the lake's azure waters and surrounding mountains. Continue to Dilijan, often called "Armenia's Switzerland" for its lush forests and alpine scenery. Take a short tour of the town, known for its traditional architecture, artisan workshops, and serene atmosphere. In the afternoon, visit Haghpat Monastery, a UNESCO-listed medieval complex set against breathtaking mountain landscapes. Explore its beautifully preserved churches and intricate stone carvings, reflecting Armenia's rich spiritual and cultural heritage. Return to Yerevan for dinner and a relaxing evening. Overnight in Yerevan. (Breakfast, Dinner)

## Day 16 - Yerevan

After breakfast, transfer to Yerevan International Airport for your departure flight. Safe travels! (Breakfast)

#### TOUR INCLUSIONS AND OPTIONAL EXTRAS

# Included

International flights

Accommodation

Guided tours & cultural programme

English - speaking guides

Half board meals

Evening entertainment

Ground transportation

Azerbaijan e-visa

## Not included

Personal travel insurance
Optional excursions

#### **Practical information**

About Best of Caucasus company
How our tours are run
Contact our travel consultants

#### **AVAILABLE PACKAGES**

#### **COMFORT - 3\* PACKAGE**

Dates	Excl. flights	Incl. flights*	Single suppl.
09/05/2025 - 24/05/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
16/05/2025 - 31/05/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
23/05/2025 - 07/06/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
30/05/2025 - 14/06/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
06/06/2025 - 21/06/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
13/06/2025 - 28/06/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
20/06/2025 - 05/07/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
27/06/2025 - 12/07/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
04/07/2025 - 19/07/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
11/07/2025 - 26/07/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
18/07/2025 - 02/08/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
25/07/2025 - 09/08/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
01/08/2025 - 16/08/2025	£2995	£3395	£345
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	19/12/2025 - 03/01/2026	£2995	£3395	£345

# **PREMIUM - 4\* PACKAGE**

Dates	Excl. flights	Incl. flights*	Single suppl.
09/05/2025 - 24/05/2025	£3145	£3545	£425
16/05/2025 - 31/05/2025	£3145	£3545	£425
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12/12/2025 - 27/12/2025	£3145	£3545	£425
19/12/2025 - 03/01/2026	£3145	£3545	£425

# ALTERNATIVE TOURS AND TAILOR-MADE ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to organized group tours, we also offer individual trips. This could be an entirely separate holiday arrangement or an extension to a regular "Best of Caucasus" trip. Whether you would like to travel independently, or just with the group of your friends or colleagues, we can help to realise your holiday plans. Depending on your preference for either comfort or budget, we can help you to design the ideal itinerary and provide the optimal value-for-money quote.

Please contact us for a quote.

Based on your chosen tour we believe you might be interested in alternative trips listed below:

- > Caucasus Express: Armenia, Georgia & Azerbaijan 10 days (CT-08), Price from £1,995, 10 days
- > <u>Discover Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia: from the Caspian to the Highlands 16 Days (CT-09)</u>, Price from £2,995, 16 days
- > Wine and Gourmet Tour of Armenia and Georgia -13 Days (CT-06), Price from £2,695, 13 days
- > Great Azerbaijan Discovery 10 days (AZ-05), Price from £1,545, 10 days

#### HOW TO BOOK

# **Step 1 - Choose Your Holiday & Departure Dates**

It is important that you choose a trip that is well suited to your interests, capabilities and experience. All our staff has first hand experience of a range of Best of Caucasus holidays and will be happy to talk to you about your chosen trip, enabling you to assess its suitability. We also recommend that you read the descriptions of the relevant region, general information about our services, booking conditions, and trip dossiers carefully. Once you know what tour is right for you, as well as your departure dates, you can start your booking.

# **Step 2 - Complete the Booking Form**

**Online:** log on to <u>www.best-of-caucasus.co.uk</u> and open the tour you wish to book and click "Book now". To provide you with a more personalised and relevant experience in all your contact with Best of Caucasus, when you book online we ask you to register on our system. Once registered you can retrieve your bookings, update newsletter subscriptions, passenger and emergency contact details, submit special dietary requests, view invoices and receipts, download trip documents.

**Email:** alternatively, you can book your tour per email - info@best-of-caucasus.co.uk, or

Phone: call us on +44 (0)20 30 51 76 40

When booking by email or over the phone please confirm your personal details (full name and address), chosen tour, departure date, package type (hotel category), and available upgrades.

# **Step 3 - Confirmation of your booking**

On receipt of your booking form, we will make any necessary reservations for you and send you confirmation invoice, including the flight details, and additional information about your destination: advice on visas, vaccinations and what to take. The invoice will also show you the exact due date of the payment.

# **Step 4 - Payment**

Please note, if your departure date is more than 56 days you will need to pay the deposit, which should cover the full cost of the flight (if applicable), plus 10% of the land-only arrangements (minimum BJ100) per person towards your tour. The outstanding payment must be made 56 days prior to departure. If you book less than 56 days before departure, full payment must be made at the time of your booking. You can make your payment by bank transfer, debit or credit card, cheque, bankers draft or postal order. You will find all relevant payment details in your invoice.

# YOUR NOTES

On request we can organise an additional programme for you, please <u>inquire</u> about the price and availability of the optional excursions.

Please find below some space to write down your queries or comments regarding this trip.				