

Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan Hiking and Cultural Tour

Key information

Duration: 20 days / 19 nights

Best season: April – October

Tour type: Private Small group

Departure Ex Baku

What's included:

Airport transfers, accommodation in hotels for 19 nights (double/ twin rooms), in guesthouses (double/ twin rooms), meals - breakfast, lunches, dinners (as per itinerary), 1 bottle of water per day (0.5lt.), all transfers in air conditioned vehicles, English speaking hiking guide service for all days, local mountain guide service where needed, all admissions fees, 24-hour office support

What's not included:

flights, visa fee, medical insurance

Itinerary in brief

Day 1 – Arrival in Baku, Azerbaijan - Transfer to the hotel - Free day

Day 2 – Free day in Baku

Day 3 – Baku City Tour

Day 4 – Yanardag - Gobustan

Day 5 – Sulut - Lahij

Day 6 – Lahij - Sheki

Day 7 – Azerbaijan-Georgia border - Transfer from the border - Signaghi – Bodbe – Khareba Winery – Telavi

Day 8 – Tbilisi City Tour

Day 9 – Mtskheta – Jvari Monastery – Gori – Stalins Museum – Uplistsikhe - Tbilisi

Day 10 – Borjomi – Kharagauli National Park – Borjomi

Day 11 – Gudauri – Vedza Sour Waters – Holy Trinity Church of Gergeti – Stepatsminda

Day 12 – Gveleti - Gveleti waterfall - Stapantsminda

Day 13 – Khada Valley – Tbilisi

Day 14 – Transfer to Georgia-Armenia border - Ijevan - Yenokavan village - Lastiver Caves and Waterfalls

Day 15 – Goshavank Monastery - Parz Lake - Dilijan - Sevanavank - Lake Sevan

Day 16 – Sevan - Selim Caravanserai on the Great Silk Road - Noratus – Cheese Master Class - Hayravank – Hermon Village / Yeghegis Village

Day 17 – Fortress of King Smbat - Tsakhats Kar Monastery (optional) - Areni wine tasting - Noravank Monastery - Yerevan
Day 18 – Yerevan City Tour - Garni Pagan Temple - Geghard Cave Monastery
Day 19 – Free day in Yerevan
Day 20 – Transfer to the airport in Yerevan - Departure

Detailed itinerary

Day 1

Arrival in Baku, Azerbaijan. Meeting at the airport, transfer to the hotel

Overnight: hotel in Baku

Day 2

Free day in Baku.

Overnight: hotel in Baku, Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

After breakfast starts tour around Old city (Baku Fortress): Tourists will visit the complex "Old City", which is UNESCO World Heritage Site. The tour starts at the entrance to Baku fortress. Tourists walk into fortress through the "Double Gates". Walking the ancient lanes of the fortress, tourists will visit the oldest Caravanserai, medieval Hamams and Mosques, Shirvanshakhs' Palace, and climb the rooftop of Maiden Tower. Maiden Tower is one of the legendary constructions of ancient East. Also the tour guide will show the tourist the place where apostle Yelisei was crucified. Once you finish Old City tour, you will head to Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center. An internationally recognized architectural marvel, Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center displays a curved modern style.

Overnight: hotel in Baku, Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Baku Old City



Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center

Day 4

After breakfast starts excursion to the Zoroastrian temple-museum "Atashgah. After an excursion in Atashgah you will head to mound Yanardag. You can also visit an interesting museum of modern art, the exhibits of which are created by an international team of artists and sculptors from items collected at the dump. Continue your tour to Gobustan- museum of Rock Paintings. Here tourists will visit interactive and open air museum. The distance from Baku is 60 km. Rock paintings of Gobustan relate to different epochs and they are dated from 10-8 millennia to medieval period. For such coverage of historical period they have taken high place among other rock painting collections of the world. Archeologists have found there more than 6000 painting on 1000 rocks, ancient livings - caves, about 40 mounds, more 100000 work tools. The most ancient paintings relate to the Mesolithic Period, but it is supposed that the life existed before that period, and thus Gobustan can be considered as a cradle of civilization. After the tour in Gobustan you will head to Mud volcanoes.

Overnight: hotel in Baku, Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Gala Museum Complex



Atashgah



Gobustan



Yanar Dag

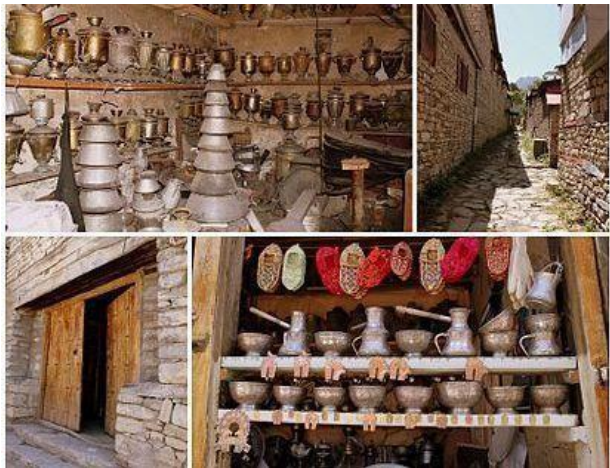
Day 5

After the breakfast you will head to Sulut village of Ismailli district. The village is located among the mountains. After a walk around the village hiking. After the hiking you will return to Sulut and head to Lahij village.

Overnight: hotel in Lahij, **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ismailli District



Lahij

Day 6

Breakfast in hotel.

A walk around Lahij village, a notable place in Azerbaijan, with its authentic handicrafts traditions, particularly related to copper. The village's carpet and rug crafts are also well known in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus. you will enjoy the drive out to Sheki, the city surrounded by snowy peaks of the Greater Caucasus, which in some places reaches 3000–3600 m. In Sheki start a guided tour. The sightseeing tour will include the Upper Town and the magnificent Palace of Sheki Khans. The palace once served as a summer residence of khans and nowadays impresses with its lavish design and surrounding chinar trees. Shebeke craft workshop will be the last destination. The tour will end with a visit to “Shebeke” handmade frescos’ workshop, “Pakhlava” famous local sweets’ workshop and “Tekulduz” popular weaving workshop.

Overnight: hotel in Sheki, **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Sheki

Day 7

On this day you will head to Georgia. After passing the Azerbaijan-Georgian (Lagodekhi) border you will meet your Georgian representatives and head to the main winemaking region of Georgia – Kakheti, where the best and exclusive wines are made with love. Our next stop is Telavi town which is the center of Kakheti and is located in the beautiful Alazani Valley. We will be Signaghi – the oldest place in Kakheti region and the status of the city was given just two hundred years ago. Nevertheless, settlements are found here from the ancient times. Wine tasting and a master class on baking Georgian bread shoti national sweet churchkhela await us in the famous winery Khareba.

Overnight: hotel in Telavi **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Signaghi



Kakheti

Our city Tour begins with city tour around Tbilisi – the charming capital of Georgia. We have a trip to the historical district of Metekhi to explore Catholic Church of the Ascension of the Virgin Mary built in the XIII century. We reach the fortress Narikala by the cable car and enjoy breathtaking panoramic view. Our next spiritual sight is the only mosque still in use in Tbilisi - Jumah Mosque, where Sunni and Shia Muslims pray side by side. We continue to Sioni Cathedral named after Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The cathedral keeps the Grapevine cross of St.Nino, which is the major symbol of Georgian Orthodox Church. We continue our trip to the modern Bridge of Peace - steel and glass bridge, laid on the river Kura. Our day ends with a trip to Mtatsminda Mount by the funicular railway.

Overnight: hotel in Tbilisi, **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Tbilisi

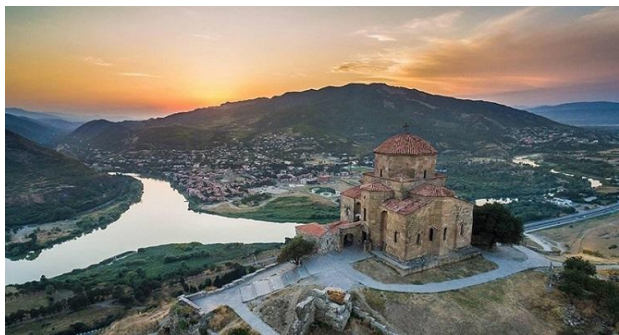


Metekhi church

Day 9

The next journey is truly spectacular, as we uncover the spiritual capital of the country – Mtskheta. Here we can enjoy the amazing view of two rivers Mtkvari and Aragvi. The city is located on an ancient trade route. explore Jvari Monastery and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral – the first and the main church in Georgia. This extraordinary (and for its time, enormous) building dates from the 11th century, early in the golden age of Georgian church architecture. Today we will introduce you the city in the east of Georgia, motherland of a cult Soviet leader of the Soviet Union Iosif Stalin. Residents of Gori still honor the memories of their great compatriot: there are museum, monuments, streets that are named in the honor of Stalin. Uplistsikhe, literally ‘Fortress of God’, is an ancient rock-hewn town which played a significant role in Georgian history over a period of approximately 3,000 years.

Overnight: hotel in Tbilisi, **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Jvari Monastery



Gori

This day you will discover Borjomi, one of the biggest ones in Georgia. You will walk to the lovely Likani River Gorge then climb up the Chitakhevi Range. You will enjoy breathtaking scenery, bird singing and isolation from the daily hustle in Borjomi NP. Here you may come across with rare species of plants, birds included in the Red List. Evening transfer to Tbilisi for rest and overnight. (*hiking trail length 7 km*).

Overnight: hotel in Borjomi **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Borjomi



Chitakhevi Range

Day 11

This day you will be driven to Kazbegi, Stepantsminda which is one of the most picturesque villages of Georgia. During your trip you will visit Gudauri, where you can see the balcony, dedicated to the treaty of Georgievs and enjoy breathtaking views. A few minute drive from Gudauri is located Vedza Sour Waters which with it natural beauty will amaze you. When you reach Stepantsminda you hiking to the Holy Trinity Church of Gergeti which is located at an altitude of 2170 m, will start. Hiking to the church takes 1,5 hr. After visiting Holy Trinity Church, continue drive to Stepantsminda.

Overnight: hotel in Stepantsminda, **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Kazgebi



Gergeti Trinity



Gudauri

In the morning you will Trip to village Gveleti located at a distance of 7 km from Stepantsminda. After reaching the village you will trek for about 700 meters to get to the Gveleti waterfall, which is in the top of 3 most beautiful waterfalls in Georgia, continue drive to Stepantsminda.

Overnight: hotel in Stepantsminda **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Gveleti Waterfalls



Day 13

Morning trip to Khada Gorge known for its pure waters, amazing waterfalls, wide meadows, bright colors, villages hidden in mountains and old defensive tower-houses. In 1 hour and 20-minute drive, you will reach ancient villages of Zaqatkari and Magartsikhe and visit Tsetskhljvari castle complex, from where opens the beautiful view of the whole Khada gorge.

Overnight: hotel in Tbilisi, **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Khada gorge

Day 14

After breakfast, you will have a transfer to the Georgian-Armenian (Sadakhlo) border. Our first stop will be the charming town of Ijevan, where you will check into your hotel. Then we will embark on a remarkable exploration of the unspoiled and rugged landscapes of northeastern Armenia. Our route will wind through picturesque forests, leading us deep into a magnificent gorge. Along the way, we will be treated to the sight of cascading waterfalls and meadows of unparalleled beauty, a true hidden gem that is often overlooked. One of the highlights of this adventure is the chance to explore the ancient caves of Lastiver, Immerse yourself in the mysteries of these historic caverns and marvel at their natural wonders. (hiking trail length 7 km)

Overnight: Hotel in Ijevan **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Lastiver



Lastiver waterfall

Day 15

On this day we will embark on a picturesque adventure that begins at Parz Lake where we will commence a hike through the enchanting trails of Dilijan National Park. Our journey will take us across the wildly stunning Areguni Pass, ultimately bringing us to the revered Goshavank Monastery in the village of Gosh. It is here that the renowned scholar Mkhitar Gosh resided in the 13th century. The hiking trail stretches approximately 8 kilometers, providing ample opportunities to appreciate the surrounding wonders.

Following the hike, we will then drive to Dilijan, a cozy town that embodies the essence of rural Armenia. We visit to newly opened Old Dilijan complex on historic Sharambeyan Street and observe the weaving carpets by local women at Carpet Showroom. This complex offers a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of the region

Finally we move towards the Lake Sevan to admire one of the highest freshwater lakes from the hilltop of Sevan Peninsula. Here you will visit Sevanavank-monastic complex located on a peninsula at the northwestern shore of Lake Sevan.

(hiking trail length 8 km)

Overnight: Hotel in Sevan **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Parz Lake



Goshavank Monastery



Lake Sevan and Sevanavank Monastery



Day 16

On this day we will cover a part of The Great Silk Road and see one of well-preserved caravanserais.

It's a place where time seems to have come to a standstill, with little change having occurred over the years.

You will visit Hayravank, a magnificent Armenian monastery dating back to the 9th to 12th century. The monastery holds a profound historical significance and is sure to provide a serene and awe-inspiring atmosphere.

Afterwards, you will visit the medieval cemetery known as Noratus, which holds a unique place in Armenian culture. Khachkars, or cross-stones, are exquisite works of art that can be found exclusively within Armenian traditions.

You have an opportunity to participate in a cheese master class right within Noratus. You will learn from skilled artisans and discover the secrets behind their exquisite cheese-making techniques.

Finally, we will head south to the village of Hermon or Yeghegis situated in a charming valley along the Yeghegis river to check into your hotel. It offers a range of amenities, including a swimming pool, thermal baths, and a gym, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable evening.

Overnight: Hotel in Hermon Village/ Yeghegis Village **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Hayravank Monastery



Noratus Cemetery

Day 17

Our exploration continues in southern Armenia. After breakfast at the hotel we embark on a hike to the remarkably well-preserved fortress of King Smbat, at an elevation of approximately 1950 meters. You will have breathtaking views and an immersive experience into the medieval history of the region. *(hiking trail length 7 km)*

Next destination is the renowned Areni wine market, where we will have an opportunity to savor some of Armenia's famous wines. Continuing our journey, we will make our way to the stunning Noravank Monastery, nestled amidst a deep and narrow canyon adorned with striking red rocks.

Finally, we head to the capital Yerevan where we check into the hotel.

Optional* You will continue to Tsakhats Kar Monastery on the elevation of 2080 m. *(hiking trail length 5 km)*

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Smabataberd Fortress



Noravank Monastery

Day 18

In the morning after breakfast, we will have a city tour of Yerevan, where you will discover the rich historical legacy of this ancient city. A notable highlight is at the History Museum of Armenia, where you can find the cuneiform inscription providing evidence that Yerevan was built in 782 B.C. Begin our exploration with a stroll through the city center, taking in the vibrant atmosphere and architectural wonders. Then, we delve into the fascinating journey through Armenian history by visiting the Armenia History Museum.

After enjoying a delightful lunch, the tour continues as we make our way to the remarkable Geghard Cave Monastery. This extraordinary site, partly carved into pure rocks, offers a glimpse into the architectural marvels of the past. Next stop is Garni Pagan Temple, the only surviving temple of its kind in the Caucasus region.

Returning to Yerevan, you will have an opportunity to experience the vibrant pulse of the city's nightlife. Soak in the energetic and lively atmosphere that the city has to offer.

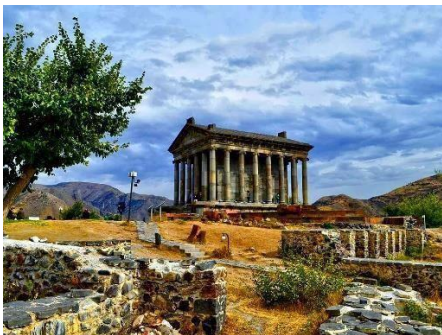
Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



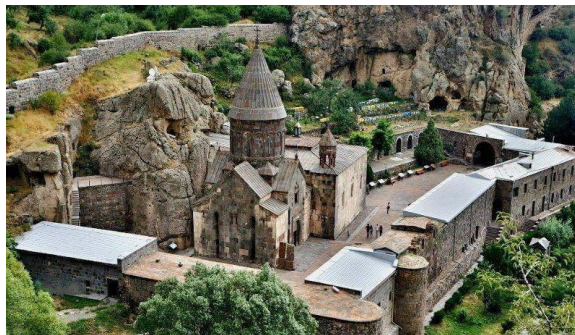
Cascade Complex in Yerevan



Yerevan Republic Square



Garni Temple



Geghard Cave Monastery

Day 19

Free day in Yerevan.

Meals: *Breakfast*

Day 20

Transfer to the airport, departure.

Meals: *Breakfast*

