

# CAUCASUS PEARLS | 15 DAYS

Small Group Tour To Azerbaijan-Georgia-Armenia



BOOK 6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE **SAVE 10%** € 2061

## STARTS FROM BAKU EVERY SECOND TUESDAY

The route is open from May to October. Choose the date and join the group in Baku.

Combined group tour to 3 South Caucasus countries – Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia is special itinerary. Three expert guides will work for you –one local guide in each country . Get acquainted with 3 different cultures, see diversity of traditions and visit the most unique and spectacular sights of these countries.

## MAIN HIGHLIGHTS & SITES:

### AZERBAIJAN

#### BAKU

- Panorama of the City & Baku Bay from Mountain park
- The medieval sight of the Old City 11-19 cc,
- Karvansaray Complex 14-15 cc.
- Mosques 11-19cc.
- Old bath, narrow small streets, Art Shops & Handicraft Workshop
- Giz Galasi Maiden Tower
- Gobustan NP of rock painting

#### SHEKI

- Diri-Baba Mausoleum
- Sheki Fortress
- Sheki Khan Palace
- Karvansaray
- Alban Church in Kish Village.

### GEORGIA

#### TBILISI CITY

- Holy Trinity Cathedral

- Narikala Fortress & Mosque
- Legutakhevi Waterfall
- Sulfur Bathhouse District
- Sharden & King Erekle II street
- Sioni & Anchiskhati Basilica

#### KARTLI REGION

- Gori J. Stalin Museum
- Uplistsikhe Caves 1st C

#### MTSKHETA CITY

- Suetitskhoveli of 12th c
- Juari Monastery of 6th c

#### KAKHETI PROVINCE

- Signagi town & museum
- Tsinandali
- Shumi
- Telavi town
- Batonis Tsikhe Museum

#### KHEVI

- Ananuri Castle 16-17th c
- Gudauri Ski-Resort 2119m
- Stepantsminda Town, Kazbegi
- Gergeti Holy Trinity Church 14th c

#### SAMTSKHE REGION

- Borjomi Spa-Resort
- Borjomi- NP
- Akhaltsikhe Town
- Rabat Castle 14-18th cc
- Vardzia Caves 12th c

### ARMENIA

- Gyumri town
- Echmiadzin
- Zvartnoc
- Yerevan city
- Matenadaran museum
- History museum
- Geghard Monastery
- Garni Pagan Temple
- Khor Virap Monastery
- Armenian Wine Village Areni
- Noravank monastery
- Lake Sevan
- Dilijan town & Sharamberyan Str
- Sanahin Monastery
- Haghpat Monastery

## DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

### 1 DAY | Baku

In the morning Georgian Holidays will organize a pick up from the hotel and our tour will start at 10:00 AM with Baku sightseeing. First, we will visit Mountain Park with panoramic views on the city and Baku Bay. After taking a walk in the alley we drive to the old city to visit several

interesting sites: Palace of the Shirvanshahs (15<sup>th</sup> c.), medieval caravanserai and bathhouse, old mosques, art shops, and finally – Maiden tower, 12<sup>th</sup> century monument that is listed under the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Overnight in Baku.

## 2 DAY | Baku-Sheki

After breakfast at the hotel, we drive to the north-west – to town of Sheki. We are going to make a few stops along the way to visit two interesting historical monuments: 15<sup>th</sup> century mausoleum of Sheikh Diri-Baba in Gobustan town, and 8<sup>th</sup> century Juma Mosque in Shamakhi town. In the evening, we get to Sheki. In the evening we are going to make a short Sheki city tour to sightsee Sheki fortress, Palace of Shaki Khans, old caravanserai and mosque.

## 3 DAY | Sheki-Sighnaghi

After breakfast we drive to Kish – a village located 5 km from Sheki – to sightsee the main attraction of the village – the Church of Kish. Church has an extraordinary history as its existing building is estimated to be built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century on much older pagan cultic site, and belonged to Caucasian Albanian, Georgian and Armenian churches in different times through history.

On day 3 our Azerbaijan tour ends as from Kish we drive to Georgia-Azerbaijan border near Lagodekhi. Tour guide will assist the group with border procedures. On the border we change the transport and from now on local Georgian guide will lead the tour. From the border we drive to Sighnaghi – a town in a traditional wine-making Kakheti region in the east Georgia. Surrounded by medieval curtain walls, Sighnaghi is located on Gombori mountain range, overlooking Alazani river valley. We are going to sightsee Sighnaghi Museum and its rich collections, such as the ethnographic and archaeological exhibitions, and collections of the works of prominent Georgian painter Niko Pirosmiani. Afterwards we can take a walk in Sighnaghi.

## 4 DAY | Sighnaghi-Tsinandali-Telavi-Tbilisi

After breakfast we leave Sighnaghi and drive to the village of Tsinandali. In Tsinandali we are going to pay a visit Aleksandre Chauchavadze House Museum. Aleksandre Chauchavadze was a famous 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian aristocrat, military figure and poet, whose residence, garden and wine-cellar functions as a museum and attracts lots of visitors nowadays. From Tsinandali we drive to Shumi to take a look on Shumi winery and wine museum “Vazioni”. Visitors can taste local wine and snacks.

Our next stop is Telavi – major town of Kakheti region. In Telavi we can visit medieval fortress that served as a residence of the Kings of Kakheti – Batonistsikhe. We make a short Telavi tour and afterwards depart for Tbilisi through the Gombori pass (1620 m).

## 5 DAY | Tbilisi city tour

On day 5 we start Tbilisi city tour by visiting the Holy Trinity Cathedral (Sameba), one of the tallest Orthodox Christian churches on earth. Our next stop is at Metekhi Platuau, where we visit Metekhi church constructed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Metekhi church is located on the cliff overlooking river Mtkvari and the old Tbilisi. From Metekhi we move down to the old city and take walk on the streets of Shardeni, Iron Row, Cotton Row and Erekle II with lots of outdoor cafes, bars, restaurants, art galleries, souvenir stores and handicraft shopping spots. We continue our way until we cross the glass Bridge of Peace and get to the Rike Park. From here we head to the Narikala fortress – ancient fortification overlooking Tbilisi from the hill, which can be reached by a aerial cable car.

From Narikala we walk back to the old city to pay a visit to the following sites: the National Botanical Garden of Georgia, Jumah Mosque, Legutakhevi canyon and waterfall, and Abanotubani – historical sulfur bathhouse district of Tbilisi. Tbilisi city tour finishes at the Meidan Square.

## 6 DAY | Tbilisi-Mtsketa-Ananuri-Gudauri

After breakfast at the hotel we drive to the north to Mtskheta – historical capital of Georgia. Mtskheta, located at the confluence of the two rivers of Mtkvari and Aragui, is famous for its two UNESCO World Heritage Sites – Juari Monastery (6<sup>th</sup> century) and Suetitskhoveli Cathedral (11<sup>th</sup> century). After Mtskheta sightseeing tour and our visit to the handicrafts, souvenir shops and wine cellars located in the center of the town, we continue our way to the north and drive through Georgian Military Highway towards the mountainous Khevi province. On our way to Gudauri ski-resort we make a stop at Zhinvali reservoir and visit Ananuri Architectural Complex. Ananuri once served as a fortress and residence of local feudal lords – Eristavi of Aragui.

In the evening we arrive at Gudauri (2196 m), Kazbegi Municipality.

## 7 DAY | Gudauri-Kazbegi-Tbilisi

On day 7 after breakfast we leave for Kazbegi town from Gudauri. On our way at the Cross Pass (2379 m), we make a stop at the red travertine hill and taste local mineral water. After our arrival in Kazbegi we set off for Mount Gergeti trek. Mount Gergeti is famous for its Holy Trinity Church – built in 14<sup>th</sup> century, church is overlooking Kazbegi town while standing under the Kazbegi peak (5033 m) and glacier. After our trek to Mount Gergeti is finished we come back to Kazbegi town and leave for Tbilisi.



## 8 DAY | Tbilisi-Gori-Borjomi -Akhaltzikhe

After breakfast we depart for Samtskhe-Javakheti region. On our way we drive through Kartli province, where our first stop is at Gori town. In Gori we are going to visit the museum of Joseph Stalin, which consists of Stalin's memorial house, exposition building, and his room with various personal belongings.

From Gori we get to Uplistsikhe cave complex – another well-known site near Gori. Uplistsikhe represents ancient cave complex and one of the oldest urban settlements in Georgia, dating back to the 1st millennium BC. It is also possible to visit a small museum nearby and watch an 8-minute movie about Uplistsikhe.

Our next stop is at Borjomi – a spa-resort located in Mtkvari ravine. Borjomi is famous for its mineral water 'Borjomi'. After a walk around town and Borjomi Central Park, we depart for Akhaltsikhe and arrive there in the evening.

## 9 DAY | Akhaltsikhe-Vardzia-Armenia-Gyumri

After breakfast we start our journey to historical Samtskhe region and its administrative centre – Akhaltsikhe (translated as "new castle") town. We are going to visit the most remarkable site of Akhaltsikhe – Rabati Castle, a medieval fortification complex. During Rabati excursion we are going to take a look at the fortress, museum, 14th century Jakeli Castle, fortress church and the St. Marine church.

From Akhaltsikhe, we get to Vardzia. Built during the Georgian Golden Age in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cc., Vardzia is another well-known rock-hewn cave monastery, located on the slopes of Erusheti mountains in Samtskhe region.

In the evening we drive back to Akhaltsikhe.

## 10 DAY | Gyumri-Ejmiatsin-Zvartnoc-Yerevan

On day 10 we start our trip to Armenia. After breakfast we drive towards Baura Border Crossing Point. On our way we make a short stop at Khertvisi fortress – a medieval fortification erected in the Mtkvari river ravine. After our arrival at Baura Border Crossing Point, we will change vehicle and guided by the local expert will continue tour in Armenia. First, we head to Gyumri – the second largest city of Armenia and have a short city tour there.

## 11 DAY | Yerevan-Garni-Geghard-Yerevan

After breakfast we take a walk in the historical center of Gyumri. Gyumri has lots of buildings from 19<sup>th</sup> century when the city was named as Alexandropol under the rule of Russian Empire.

After Gyumri city tour we continue our journey to Vagharshapat town to visit two important Armenian monuments – Etchmiadzin Cathedral, built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and 7<sup>th</sup> century Zvartnots Cathedral. Etchmiadzin Cathedral represents a center and symbol of Armenian Apostolic Church.

From Vagharshapat we head to the capital of Armenia – Yerevan. In the evening we pay a visit to Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, known as Matenadaran museum, and take a look at its rich collection of medieval manuscripts and books.

## 12 DAY | Yerevan-Khor Virap-Areni-Noravak

On day 8 after breakfast we begin our excursion of the Yerevan city and its surroundings. First, we will visit Yerevan History Museum in the center of the city. Museum has a rich collection of different artifacts that represent local culture and history from ancient to present times.

From Yerevan we set off to see the Temple of Garni and Geghard monastery (founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> c.). The Temple of Garni is an ancient pagan temple with Greco-Roman colonnaded architectural style. Destroyed by the earthquake in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this pre-Christian temple was rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the Soviet times. From Garni we can take a walk along the canyon of Azat river and get to Geghard, which is located close from the Temple of Garni. Geghard monastery is listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Finally, we drive back to Yerevan.

## 13 DAY | Yerevan-Sevan-Sanahin-Tbilisi

On day 13 after breakfast at the hotel we take a trip to Khor Virap Monastery in Ararat Province. Khor Virap is one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in Armenia due to the local beliefs, according to which St. Gregory the Illuminator, who is credited with converting Armenia to Christianity, was imprisoned in this place for 13 years by the Armenian King. Visitors can also observe view on the Mount Ararat – national symbol of Armenia, from the monastery

From Khor Virap we continue our way to southeast direction and get to the wine village of Areni, located in Vayots Dzor Province and famous for its red wine. We can visit the wine factory and taste local Armenian wine. From Areni we drive to Noravank monastery, established in the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Noravank is situated in a narrow gorge of Amaghu river, near the town of Yeghegnadzor.

## 14 DAY | Tbilisi

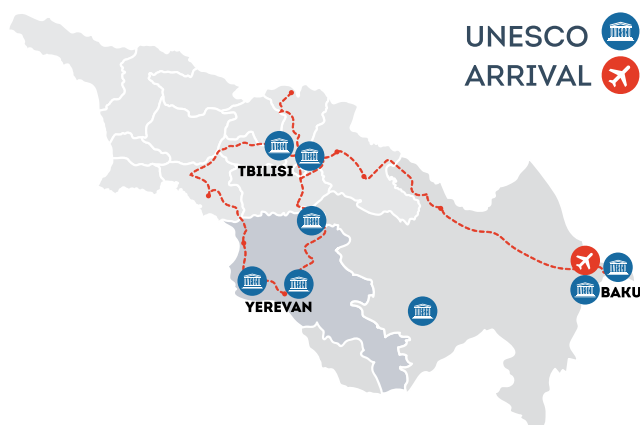
After breakfast we drive to one of the world's largest alpine lakes – Sevan (1900 m). From Lake Sevan we continue our way to the north and arrive in the administrative center of Tavush Province – Dilijan town. On Dilijan city tour we are going to visit Sharambeyan street full of workshops, handicraft shops, souvenir stores and traditional buildings.

From the center of Tavush Province, we move to Lori region and visit medieval Sanahin monastery (built in 10<sup>th</sup> c.), which is another site among the UNESCO World Heritage list from Armenia. Sanahin monastery was founded by the Bagratid royal family in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and consists of several churches and chapels. From Sanahin we get to Haghpat monastery located nearby. From Haghpat we drive to Georgia-Armenia border. From Sadakhlo border crossing point we continue our way to Tbilisi led by Georgian driver.

Meeting with Georgian Holidays staff at 18:00.

## 15 DAY | Tbilisi

Breakfast at the hotel. Check out time until 12:00 pm.





**€ 2061 PRICE INCLUDES:**

**TRANSPORTATION:**

- 1x transfer from Lagodekhi border day 3
- 1x transfer to Baura border day 10
- Transportation service all days
- 1x local jeep in Kazbegi day 7

**STAFF:**

- English speaking Guide & Driver service all days

**14 OVERNIGHTS IN DOUBLE/TWIN ROOMS 3\* HOTELS:**

- 1 x overnight in Baku
- 1 x overnight in Sheki
- 1 x overnight in Sighnaghi
- 4 x overnights in Tbilisi
- 1 x overnight in Gudauri
- 2 x overnight in Akhaltsikhe
- 1 x overnight in Gyumri
- 3 x overnights in Yerevan

**MEALS:**

- 14x breakfasts
- 1 x dinner on day 6

**ENTERTAINMENT AND OTHER:**

- 1 x wine tasting in Shumi winery on day 4
- 1 x glass of wine in Tsinandali museum on day 4
- 1 x wine tasting in the village Areni on day 12
- Entrance fees per program;
- 1 bottle of mineral water per person per day

The deposit for this tour is: **300 €**

**ADDITIONAL PRICING INFORMATION:**

- Single room supplement is: **279 €**

**15 DAY TOUR STARTS EVERY SECOND TUESDAY  
JOIN IN BAKU**

Book 6 months in advance & <b>SAVE 10%</b>			
2019 START DATES	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN
	21.05	04.06	10.09
		18.06	24.09
		02.07	08.10
		16.07	
		30.07	
		13.08	
		27.08	

Book 12 months in advance & <b>SAVE 15%</b>			
2020 START DATES	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN
	19.05	02.06	08.09
		16.06	09.09
		30.06	22.09
		14.07	06.10
		28.07	
		11.08	
		25.08	

