

## Culinary Tour "Food on Foot -1"

Duration tour: 5 days, 4 nights



Currently gastronomic or culinary tourism is increasingly conquering the world.

«Explore Azerbaijan» offers you both - to see the ancient buildings, forts and museums and also to try the amazing drinks, national dishes and sweets prepared under ancient recipes ...

It is known that the country's culinary traditions can say a lot about the culture, lifestyle and temperament of its people. Traveling on the gastronomic routes and tasting the masterpieces of the national cuisine of Azerbaijan, you can discover it for yourself with another "delicious" part.

The proposed program includes visits to the most interesting regions of Baku, and each meal will be quite different: dishes from the tandoor, a variety of rice, Caspian freshest fish, kebabs, sorbets, wine, baklava, halva and many other yummys - all this is fully consistent with the historical ethnos the region, its culinary habits and traditions.

### **Tour Program:**

#### **Day 1:** Arrive to Azerbaijan

After landing at the Baku International Airport, passport control and other formalities for the exit of the terminal, visitors are welcomed by employee of the company.

Also, our staff can assist guests with loading luggage.

Transfer to the hotel.

The duration of the way from the airport to the hotel is approx. 35 -40 minutes.

Arrival at the hotel.

Check-in arrival at the hotel.

After a short break the guest are launching the Night City Tour.

Night in Baku is like a bright, revived picture.

After the construction boom since the beginning of 20th century there are many new buildings, museums, office buildings, hotels, skyscrapers emerged in the city. Our tour begins at the Upland Park, which offers a magnificent view of the city, that has a completely new look by night, lit up with glaring lights. Houses and parks are wearing an evening gown to give an atmosphere of holiday for inhabitants and guests of the capital.

Upland Park is located on a hill in the western part of the city. This is the best place to see the city and the Baku Bay. The architecture of the capital is very eclectic; it is a combination of different styles and influences, both Eastern and Western.

Coming up next on the program the guests will be able to stroll at the Baku promenade (Boulevard), which is one of the attractions of Baku as well. It is a favorite vacation spot for Baku citizens and guests of the city. In 2009 the Boulevard celebrated its 100 anniversary.

Each Baku citizen will prove that the main places for promenade in Baku are Nizami Street and Fountain square.

In the middle of the XIX century, since a favorable location and an abundance of shops, the street was called "Marketplace" or "Torgovaya". And now, many decades people of Baku continue to call as "Torgovaya" a pedestrian part of Nizami street, closed for public traffic from Fountain Square to the Rashid Behbudov street.

Fountain Square also has a long history, and in the beginning of the XIX century was called the Square. After numerous changes in 2010, the area acquired its present appearance.

In particular, original fountains, pavilions and kiosks were reconstructed, the existing vegetation to preserve and the area of green space was increased.

21:00 Dinner

The main dish for lunch: lamb kabab

One of the oldest dishes of the East is kebab. It is considered a traditional dish of eastern and Caucasian cuisine. During frying the meat absorbs the amazing smell of wood, grilled in the smoke, so it gets amazing aroma and taste. Marinated meat cooked on a wood or charcoal, can rightly be called a real barbecue.

While serving the dish is decorated with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers and herbs.

After the dinner guests return to the hotel.

Night in Baku

**Day 2:** Baku City Tour and Old City excursion / lunch / tour of the winery / dinner

Завтрак в отеле.

Breakfast at the hotel

10:00 Start of the excursion

The history of the capital of Azerbaijan – Baku - goes back to ancient times, although the exact date of its establishment is still unknown. The territory of the Absheron Peninsula, where the city is located, has a favorable geographical position, a convenient bay, a warm, dry climate, fertile soil, natural resources, so the emergence of the ancient settlements here was quite natural.

Baku, its oil, its "burning earth" have been known far beyond its borders since ancient times.

The written sources of Middle Ages' mentioning Baku invariably refer to "eternal flames" that were burning in Baku's surroundings.

City tour begins with a visit to the Upland Park.

Upland Park is located on a hill in the western part of the city. This is the best place to see the city and the Baku Bay. The architecture of the capital is very eclectic; it is a combination of different styles and influences such as barocco, classicism and modern architecture, both Eastern and Western.

Then the tour will continue visiting the "old city" that had preserved and walls and narrow cobbled streets till our days...

A number of the Soviet-time movies were shot here. Tourists will see the main attractions of the Old City, including the Palace of the Shirvan Shahs (XV cent), the symbol of the city - Maiden Tower (IX cent), Karvansarays, mosques etc.

13:00 Lunch at the Old City restaurant

Main dish is Dolma from grape leaves.

Dolma is a dish with grape leaves filled with boiled mutton meat and rice. In some regions it is prepared from fish. It is served with sour cream and crushed garlic. Dolma is a unique dish. In Azerbaijan cuisine there are more than 20 versions of dolma.

In the last part of the tour the tourists will visit the winery in Novkhany village.

A trip to the winery in the outskirts of Baku offers a unique opportunity for everyone to get acquainted to winery craft, learn the culture, technology and the ancient traditions of the production of the famous Azerbaijani wines and observe the production process.

During the break, guests will be able to taste the different varieties of Azerbaijani wines and cheeses.

Return to the hotel

19:30 Drive to the dinner

Main dish: Azerbaijani pilaf with chestnuts and meat.

This pilaf is a little different from those which are usually served to all the tourists who visited Central Asia or Turkey.

Pilaf with chestnuts is cooked differently.

First, rice is prepared in a special way, then go all the accompanying dishes, which are a kind of additives to the king-dish.

On cream melted butter, simmered onion sliced in half rings is being fried with the addition of turmeric.

Meat, meanwhile, is cooked separately in salted water, which in the end sprinkled with fried onion oil, dried plum, and then roasted chestnuts.

Return to the hotel

Night at the hotel

### **Day 3. Absheron Peninsula**

Breakfast at the hotel

10:00 Drive to Fire worshipers' Temple Atashgah

Azerbaijan is one of the few places on earth, where even today one can observe elements of preserved fire cult and the ancient Zoroastrianism religion. These places where oil oozes from the earth, and natural gas breaks out like flaming torches have always attracted fire worshipers from around the world. Baku, its oil, its "burning earth" have been known far beyond its borders since ancient times. The official religion of the ancient states that emerged in the VII century BC, such as Mann and Midia was Zoroastrianism. The spread of Zoroastrianism in the territory of the modern Azerbaijan was due to spontaneously flammable sources of oil and gas. Therefore, in this area such a monument as the temple Ateshgah has survived.

Fire Temple Ateshgah (literally Fire House) is located in 30 kilometers from the center of Baku, in the south-eastern outskirts of the Absheron Peninsula.

After the tour, the male part of the group is given the opportunity to acquire unique skills of cooking kebab under the guidance of a professional chef who will learn you to cook this dish in the best traditions of the Azerbaijani cuisine.

For the female half in the second part of the program a master class in cooking gutabs - cakes made of thin dough with meat or vegetable fillings will be arranged.

Main dish: Lula-Kebab is one of shish kebab kinds, prepared from forcemeat of mutton filled with spices and put for 20—30 minutes in the refrigerator. Ready Lula-kebab is rolled in an unleavened wheat cake (lavash) with onions, greens.

16:00 Return to the hotel

Free time

19:00 drive to the restaurant

Main dish: vegetable dolma: eggplants, tomatoes and sweet pepper

In Azerbaijan dolma is prepared from a combination of three vegetables — eggplants, tomatoes and sweet pepper. The forcemeat of a lamb with plentiful addition of fragrant food grasses and spices are used for stuffing. This kind of eggplant dolma is called — «badimjan dolmasi». For all listed kinds of dolma, except from fish, necessarily submit sour cream or other sour-milk product with addition of garlic or without it.

Return to the hotel

Overnight at the hotel

#### **Day 4.** Trip to Gobustan

09:00 Baku-style breakfast

Since childhood we were taught that breakfast is a must. Though not everyone follows this rule. In the morning the stomach categorically refuses any food, and some do not eat breakfast because get up later and just do not have time to eat. But not in Baku!

Breakfast is the most important meal, because it provides us with energy for the day ahead.

Traditional breakfast for Baku is eggs fried with tomatoes. It is the favorite dish of locals - coupled with hot domestic bread - "tandoor", fragrant mountain honey, butter, black tea with thyme and lemon – all this turns into a delicacy.

Next, the group will have an excursion to Gobustan Reserve.

The reserve is well known with its perfectly preserved rock paintings - petroglyphs - a kind of artistic "archive" of human evolution on the Earth.

"Documents" of such archives is the first human's presentation of his/her "I" to the outside world.

Gobustan Rocks are not just the brightest witnesses of the prehistoric period of human existence. They reflect the history of this region for nearly 15,000 years - since the end of the era of the Upper Paleolithic till the Middle Ages.

Today Azerbaijani scientists found, described and studied more than 4,000 petroglyphs (rock painting in the stone carving art) and this important work continues.

Before the start of the tour around Gobustan guests will visit the interactive museum with the same name, where with the help of special programs and multimedia touch screens you will get information about the nature, the flora of Gobustan.

Only few people know that Azerbaijan ranks the first place in the number of active mud volcanoes. Traces of their work can be found in Gobustan as well. These volcanoes are formations of a cone-shaped hill with a crater in the ground.

And of course, that the tourists also have the opportunity to explore them during this tour.

13:30 Lunch in a fish restaurant.

Main dish: Fish lavangi. Azerbaijan lavangi is mostly prepared in the traditional tandoor (ceramic oven). For cooking usually local fish kutum with a gentle, fatty and very tasty meat is

used. The main highlight of this dish is the filling, which is made from nuts, pomegranate, special sauce, onions, raisins and spices

Free time.

Guests can stroll through the main streets of the city, to purchase gifts and souvenirs.

19:00 Drive to farewell dinner

Main dish: Saj with lamb - very tasty and juicy dish that is cooked in a special way. The classic recipe involves the use of a special stand of the same name. Due to vegetables in saj a delicious juice permeates the meat and potatoes.

Saj is served with Azerbaijani semi-sweet wine "Madrasa", manufactured in the mountainous regions of Shemakha and Ismayilli by classical technology "madrasa".

Return to hotel

#### **Day 5. Transfer to the airport**

After breakfast the tourists go to the airport, where the accompanying employee of the company will help the guests with check-in and baggage drop.

(In case of a late departure luggage can be left at the hotel)

End of the tour.

#### **Price includes:**

3+\* Hotel accommodation

Comfortable transport during the excursions

English speaking guide

Entry fees to the museums

Meals included into program

Wine degustation

Commission fees of tour company (10%)

#### **Price does not include:**

Air ticket

Medical insurance

All extras

Alcoholic beverages except as indicated in the program

Visas

**Note:** \* Cost of the tour includes accommodation in comfortable 3\* hotels. For additional payment, depending on customer's wish the category of the hotel can be changed to a higher one.

### **Visa**

On arrival at the international airports of Azerbaijan visa can only be obtained by the citizens of Turkey and Israel. For the citizens of Russia and CIS countries (except Turkmenistan) visa to Azerbaijan is not required. Citizens of other countries must obtain a visa prior to arrival via the Azerbaijani Consulate in your country or issue electronic visas through our travel agency. To obtain a visa, please contact our managers at least 4 weeks prior to arrival to Azerbaijan.

### **Practical Information**

Foreign Exchange: Up-to-date information on exchange rates can be obtained here:  
<http://www.cbar.az/>

Local Currency: Manat

Recommended Currency for Exchange: USD or EURO.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your guide will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability: Only in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Only in major towns.

Travelers Cheques: Travelers cheques are difficult to change.