



## «ASSA» combo tour to Azerbaijan & Georgia

Countries: Azerbaijan-Georgia

Tour duration: 6 days, 5 nights

Category: Cultural

Period: all year round except blackout dates\*

Tour price: from 552\$ (per person in DBL/TWN)

*If someone wants to discover a city or a country, its life or architectural monuments, it's never enough looking at the pictures on the Internet or reading the information in books.*

*Nothing can convey the flavor of particular city as a real acquaintance with its inhabitants, being next to the monuments of antiquity and a visit to local restaurants. Over the centuries, the culture, architecture and cuisine of Transcaucasia have absorbed all the best qualities of the peoples living in these countries.*

*Within this tour we invite you to visit two unique countries - Azerbaijan and Georgia.*

### Tour program:

#### Day 1. Arrival in Baku, check-in at the hotel

Check-in at the hotel (from 14:00)

Free day

Overnight at the hotel



#### Day 2. Baku sightseeing tour, visiting the "Old City" and the Heydar Aliyev Center

09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

10:00 The tour starts with a visit to the Highland Park. Highland Park is located on a hill in the western part of the city. This is the best place to see the city and Baku bay.

Next, the guests will visit the Old City - with its fortified walls, historic buildings and narrow cobbled streets. Guests will appreciate the main attractions of the Old Town, including the Palace of the Shirvanshahs and the famous Maiden Tower. Just imagine that the stones under your feet keep the history of this ancient city - its honor and glory, misfortunes and sorrows.

During the walk, you will definitely feel that the air here smells like magic - the sea air, smelling of salt and oil, is mixed with the aromas of oriental spices and kebabs, flowing from numerous restaurants. Baku is like a young girl, is full of energy, beautiful, bright and full of life. It is ready to change, but, nevertheless, follows the precepts of the ancestors. Behind the walls the city life rages, and in the Old City everything is quiet and decorous, as it has been for centuries. Baku citizens do not like to live in a hurry.

Lunch (for additional charge)

From 14:00 - 18:00 guests will be getting acquainted with Baku Boulevard and Baku Bay.

Baku Boulevard is a favorite vacation spot of the city residents and guests of the capital and also one of the attractions of the city, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2009.

Our today's tour will end with a visit to the Heydar Aliyev Center.

The Heydar Aliyev Center is a cultural center, which includes an auditorium (congress center), a museum, exhibition halls and administrative offices. The project of the center was designed by the famous architect Zaha Hadid.

19:00 Return to the hotel and free time

Overnight in Baku



### **Day 3. Excursion across the Absheron Peninsula. Visit to archaeological reserve of Gobustan, the Temple of Fire-worshippers of Ateshgah, Ethnographic reserve of Gala and departure to Tbilisi by train**

09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

10:00 Departure for an excursion to the archaeological reserve of Gobustan.

The reserve is widely known for the well-preserved rock paintings - petroglyphs - a kind of artistic archive of human evolution on planet Earth. The rocks of Gobustan are not only the brightest witnesses of the prehistoric period of human existence. They reflect the history of this region for almost 15 thousand years - from the end of the Upper Paleolithic age to the Middle Ages. Today, Azerbaijani scientists have identified, described and studied more than 4,000 petroglyphs (rock paintings in stone carving techniques) and this important work still continues. Before starting a Gobustan tour, guests will visit the interactive museum, where they can get information about the history and nature of Gobustan using special multimedia programs and touch screens.

Lunch (for additional charge)

After lunch, excursion to the Temple of Fire-worshippers of Ateshgah

Azerbaijan is one of the few places on earth, where even today it is possible to find the remains of the fire-worshippers' cult and the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. Zoroastrianism was the official religion in the 7th century BC in Manna and Media. It was related to the self-igniting sources of oil and gas.

The Temple of Ateshgah (literally the House of Fire) is located 30 kilometers from the center of Baku, on the southeastern outskirts of the Absheron Peninsula.

15:30 - 18:30 The tour proceeds with the trip to the Ethnographic Reserve of Gala.

Ethnographic open-air museum Gala is located about 40 minutes from Baku. Museum that was founded on the site of archaeological excavations.



In the village, which is about five thousand years old, there is a number of neighborhoods that have survived to this day. During the tour, guests will get acquainted with the ancient dwellings, traditions and methods of farming, and with the way of living of people who lived here many centuries ago.

20:00 Transfer to the central railway station.

The train departs from Baku railway station every day at 20:30. Arrival in Tbilisi is at 10:45. The way to Tbilisi takes 15–16 hours, while the border control takes 1 hour on each side. Passport control takes place in the train.

#### **Day 4. Arrival in Tbilisi, transfer to the hotel, check-in and city tour**

City tour starts at Shota Rustaveli Avenue and Freedom Square. Visiting the Rustaveli monument is a must. Here the guests will see the national museum, the parliament building, the palace of the former Caucasian governor-general, Alexander Park and the Kashveti temple. Then the tour continues with a visit to the Tsminda Sameba - Holy Trinity Cathedral of Tbilisi. This is the main cathedral of the Georgian Orthodox Church and the largest church in Georgia. Temple was built on the hill of St. Ilya which is also the left bank of the Kura (Mtkvari) river, majestically rising above the city. Then we will walk through the one more famous avenue of the city - Aghmashenebeli avenue with its recently restored beautiful facades of buildings of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century.

Return to the hotel

Free time

Overnight in Tbilisi



## Day 5. Tbilisi – Mtskheta tour with a lunch break

Breakfast at the hotel

09.00 Excursion program begins with a visit to Zion Cathedral. This is historically the main temple of Tbilisi, named after the Mount of Zion and consecrated in honor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was built by the order of the Byzantine grandee Guram I in the 6th century, but was destroyed by the Arabian invaders in the XII century. Georgian king David IV the Builder erected a new building of the temple here. It is revered cathedral in Georgia and some of the hierarchs of the Georgian Church are buried here, but its main relic is a cross woven from grape vines, an ancient cross of St. Nina, who brought Christianity to Georgia.

Next on tour we will reach the Anchishkhat basilica.

Anchishkhat Basilica - the oldest church building in Tbilisi, dating the VI century. The construction of this sacred temple began soon after the capital of Georgia was moved from Mtskheta to Tbilisi in the reign of the successor Vakhtang Gorgasali.

Anchishkhat Basilica has another name - the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. This beautiful rectangular church building was built under the influence of ancient Palestinian architecture. The doors of the Anchishkhat church are decorated with a traditional Georgian cross. On the western facade of the temple, a medallion is carved out of stone with a cross, which is preserved from the earliest part of the building. The church got its current name in the 17th century, when a large icon was transferred here from the Anchi Cathedral (South Georgia). The icon of the Savior from Anchi became widely known in the XII century, when the goldsmith of Queen Tamara Bek Opizari made a silver casing for her with gold inserts. In the 17th century, private owners transferred the icon to the church of St. Mary in Tbilisi. Here, the icon of the Savior was for more than 200 years. In the end of the XIX century it was placed in the Church Museum. Today the Anchi Icon is exhibited at the Museum of Arts of Georgia.

Further, we will proceed to The Bridge of the Peace. Made of glass pedestrian Bridge of Peace on the Kura (Mtkvari) River connects the Old Town and modern Tbilisi. The wave-shaped construction with a length of 156 m was designed by Italian architect Michel de Lucci, together with French lighting engineer Philippe Martino.

In the evening, the bridge is highlighted with more than 30 thousand colors. The interactive lighting system on both sides of the bridge, using the Morse code, depicts one of the elements of the periodic table, which is in the human body. The main idea of the installation is that all people are one.

Next on tour is the ancient capital of Georgia, the city of Mtskheta, which is a holy and cult place for every Georgian. The city was founded in the second half of the 1st millennium BC. That is, almost the same time when Eastern Georgian kingdom, Kartli (Iberia) appeared. Mtskheta was the capital of that kingdom. Before reaching Mtskheta, we will visit one of the most ancient monasteries of Georgia called Jvari. The name of this monastery translated as the "Monastery of the Cross". Jvari stands on the rocky mountaintop at the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi rivers, overlooking the town of Mtskheta. According to traditional accounts, on this location in the early 4th century Saint Nino, a female evangelist credited with converting King Mirian III of Iberia to Christianity, erected a large wooden cross on the site of a pagan temple. The cross was reportedly able to work miracles and therefore drew pilgrims from all over the Caucasus. A small church was erected over the remnants of the wooden cross in c.545 named the "Small Church of Jvari". Jvari is the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in Georgia.



Lunch (for additional charge)

The main church of Mtskheta is Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. A masterpiece of the Early Middle Ages, Svetitskhoveli is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. It is currently the second largest church building in Georgia, after

the Holy Trinity Cathedral. The cathedral is surrounded by a defensive wall, built of stone and brick during the reign of King Erekle II (Heraclius) in 1787. The top storey was designed for military purposes and has gun emplacements. The entrance to the Cathedral from the wall is located to the west. The wall has eight towers: six of them are cylindrical and two of them are square. Archaeological expeditions in 1963 found the house of Patriarch of the 11th century at the southern part of the wall. Inside the church yard, the remains of the two-story castle of Patriarch Anton II were found.

Next we will visit Samtavro Monastery. Samtavro Orthodox Church and Nunnery of St. Nino in Mtskheta, Georgia, were built in the 4th century by King Mirian III of Iberia. The church was reconstructed in the 11th century by King George I and Catholicos-Patriarch Melkisedek. The famous Georgian Saint monk Gabriel is buried in the yard of Samtavro Church.

Return to Tbilisi and overnight



### Day 6. Departure day

Breakfast at the hotel

Check-out and departure

#### Tour cost:

Number of Persons	Single	Double / PP	Triple / PP
2 Persons	\$741	\$689	-
4 Persons	\$668	\$616	\$595
6 Persons	\$632	\$580	\$559
8 Persons	\$636	\$584	\$563
10 Persons	\$621	\$569	\$548
12 Persons	\$611	\$559	\$538
14 Persons	\$604	\$552	\$531

#### Price includes:

- Transfers: Airport - Hotel
- Accommodation for 2 nights at 3\* hotels on the basis of breakfasts in Baku + 1 night to be spent on the train Baku-Tbilisi
- Accommodation for 2 nights at 3\* hotels on the basis of breakfasts in Tbilisi
- Transfer in Baku: Railway Station - Hotel
- Transfer in Tbilisi: Railway Station - Hotel - Airport

- Baku-Tbilisi train ticket
- Bottle of local souvenir wine
- Comfortable transportation during excursions
- Services of an English-speaking guide
- Entrance fees to museums
- Water bottle per person / daily

**Price does not include:**

- Medical insurance
- Lunches and dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Additional expenses of the guests
- Fees for photo and video shooting at museums
- Visa fee

**\*Blackout dates:**

- Novruz Holiday **19.03.2020 – 01.04.2020**
- Ramazan Holiday **23.05.2020 – 26.05.2020**
- Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix and UEFA (3 group matches and 1 quarter-final) **01.06.2020 – 15.07.2020**
- Gurban EID Holiday **31.07.2020 – 03.08.2020**
- New Year **29.12.2020 – 06.01.2021**

**Accommodation and upgrade:**

The cost of the tour provides accommodation in comfortable hotels of 3\* category. Accommodation in Baku in hotels Diplomat, AU Room or Azcot. Accommodation in Tbilisi in hotels Sharden, Kalasi or their alternative. The exact name of the hotel is given on the day of booking the tour.

At additional payment on request, depending on the wishes of the client, the category of the hotel can be upgraded.

**Check-in and check-out policy:**

\* For the tourists' convenience, please inform in advance about early arrivals or late departures of your guests.

\* Depending on the hotel, guests may be charged for early check-in or late check-out.

Check in until 06:00 am: surcharge of 100% of the cost of one day.

Check in after 06:00 am, but before 14:00: surcharge of 50% of the cost of one day.

**Children's policy:**

\* Children up to 6 years old are free of charge (without an extra bed with accommodation with two adults). In case of placement of one adult + 1 child under 6 years old, surcharge 40% of the cost of the tour.

\* Children from 6 up to 12 years get discount in the amount of 30% of the cost of the tour.

**Cancellation and penalties:**

\* All changes and cancellations of already confirmed applications must be made in writing form.

\* Cancellation of a confirmed application more than 21 days prior to arrival is not subject to penalties.

\* If you cancel a confirmed application less than 14 days or more than 10 days before the planned arrival: a penalty of 50% of the total cost of the tour will be applied.

\* If you cancel a confirmed application less than 10 days or after the date of the planned arrival: a penalty of 100% of the full cost of the tour will be applied.

**Visa to Azerbaijan:**

Citizens of Turkey, Israel, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Japan, South Korea, China, Malaysia and Singapore can obtain visa upon arrival to Baku International Airport. However, for more convenient passport control and to save time, citizens of above mentioned countries might obtain e-visas from our managers.

E-visa is issued within 3-5 working days. The procedure of registration takes 3-5 business days in the regular mode of \$30 and \$65 for 1 working day in case of urgent visa.

The procedure of registration begins after all documents are submitted and payment is confirmed.

Electronic visas will be issued only to countries listed [here](#)

**Visa to Georgia:**

For most countries visa to Georgia is not required.

**Contact Manager**



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