



«Azerbaijan – The Land of Thousand Cultures»

Tour duration: 7 days, 6 nights

Category: Ethnographical

Period: all year round except blackout dates*

Azerbaijan is a country of tolerance and unity for many people and religions. Long time ago, the territory of Azerbaijan was full of the diverse peoples and cultures. They came, mixed, died, yet leaving their trace on the fate of the whole nation. Until now, the mountainous country is bordering the countries of the Christian and Islamic worlds. Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Azerbaijan is home to many small nations and ethnic groups. Each of them keeps its traditions, language, culture as every nation can tell its own story.



Tour program:

Day 1. Arrival in Baku

Check-in at the hotel

Free day

Overnight in Baku

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

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.

13:00 Lunch (for additional charge)

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.

18:30 Return to the hotel and free time

Overnight in Baku



Day 3. Drive to Guba-Khachmaz region and visit to the high-mountainous village of Khynalyg (North of Azerbaijan, 310 km, 5 hours' drive from Baku)

Breakfast at the hotel

Departure for a trip to Guba

Krasnaya Sloboda is a unique place in the Caucasus, where 3000 mountain Jews live compactly. This settlement has existed in Guba since the 13th century. In 1742, the local ruler Falihan gave permission to the Jews, persecuted by Islamic fundamentalists, to settle on the left bank of the mountain river Kudial-chai opposite the city itself. At the moment, there are seven synagogues in the village. All of them are made of brick, and the largest ones are decorated with domes. Red roofs, carved limestone panels, sheer cliffs near the village - these are the distinctive features of this settlement.

13:00 Lunch in the village with traditional dishes (for additional charge)

After lunch, there is a trip to the Khynalyg village (**visiting of Khynalyg is possible only under appropriate weather conditions**) - an island of ancient culture among the Caucasus Mountains.

Not far from Krasnaya Sloboda, the village of Khynalyg is located, where 2,000 Khynalyks live. They are a small ethnic group that has preserved their own special language, rituals and traditions. The small, magical Khynalyg is located high in the Caucasus Mountains, at the altitude of 2350 m above sea level in Guba region. Khynalyg people lived in the Caucasus for thousands of years. Until 2006, Khynalyg was out of reach nine months a year due to the bad road conditions. However, the situation has changed in the recent years and now more and more local and foreign travelers visit this remote village.

The village is inhabited by 2000 fair-skinned blue-eyed people who consider themselves descendants of the prophet Noah. The people of Khynalyg are usually referred to the 26 Albanian tribes described in Strabo's "Geography". The main reasons for this are the distinctive Albanian cemeteries in the village, as well as a language similar to the language of other Albanian tribes.

Dinner in the village with traditional dishes (for additional charge)

Departure to Baku

Overnight in Baku



Day 4. Drive to Gabala, Ismayilli region, visit to the village of Ivanovka, as well as the ancient settlement of the Albanians (North-Western part of Azerbaijan, 260 km, 4 hours' drive from Baku)

Breakfast at the hotel

A trip to **Ivanovka**. Ivanovka is a village and municipal unit of the Ismayilli region. Today it is the last collective farm remaining in the country. Located 200 km from Baku in the north of the Ismayilli region, Ivanovka today has about 3,000 inhabitants. Being casted away from their lands, the Molokan people did not lose their enthusiasm and quickly settled down in a new place. As soon as you get to Ivanovka, you will immediately notice that this place is not like all the others. Many locals are blond and have blue-eyes. Many houses are built styled of log cabins and the roofs are covered with red tiles. Interestingly, the nickname Molokane is directly related to the word "milk" in Russian. In the 18th century, this was considered an insult, since the Molokans drank milk during the Great Lent, when the Orthodox fasted. Later the term was re-interpreted as drinking the sacred milk of God, and the word ceased to be offensive. Molokans adhere to exclusively Puritan mores - they avoid smoking, fighting and icons. Instead of churches, religious meetings are held in prayer houses, devoid of any decorations.

Lunch in the village with local dishes (for additional charge)

A trip to Nij

The small town of Nij, located 40 km from Gabala, is the only place on earth where Udi people live. Its population is only 6196 people. The ancestors of this small nation, called utias, were one of the 26 Albanian tribes and played an important role in the creation of the state of Caucasian Albania in the 4th and 3rd centuries. BC. According to the latest research, the Udi language was the basis of the language of Caucasian Albania. This tribe, the ancestors of the modern Udins, was mentioned in the works of Herodotus, Strabo and Pliny the Great. According to these historians, Utia became politically active due to their participation in the Persian invasions of Xerxes I in Greece. Udins, being the most ancient people in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, have many privileges that help them to preserve and develop their culture. As a result of the efforts of the Azerbaijani Government, the cultural and educational society of the Uray of Orayin (Source) resumed its activities. This community promotes the history and culture of the Udins.

Dinner in the village with local dishes (for additional charge)

Then a trip to Gabala city

Overnight in Gabala



Day 5. Drive to Ilisu and Lekit villages

A trip to the village of Ilisu which is full of sights, nature reserve, architectural monuments and waterfalls. Ilisu is a small place where all the houses are built along a single street, but it still recalls the days of the past glory, when Ilisu was the capital of an independent kingdom, which was later annexed to the Russian Empire. In addition to the charming village houses, there are several other buildings in Ilisu that recall the past of it: a fortress of Sumuggala from the 16th century, which was almost completely destroyed, the 19th century Galaja tower and a well-preserved the 18th century mosque. Here you can buy natural honey collected by local beekeepers, take a walk to the waterfall and enjoy drinking tea from a samovar outdoors. Drive to Lekit. Lekit is one of the attractions of Gakh region. Locals claim that the village is 1600 years old. Here the guests will see the ruins of a temple complex of the 12th century and a waterfall completely covered in moss. The area is famous for its dense forests, mountain rivers and springs, as well as a complex of mountain fortresses. The village is inhabited by Tsakhurs, a Caucasian ethnic group with ancient history and traditions.

Next, A trip to Gakh and dinner (for additional charge)

Drive to Sheki city

Overnight in Sheki



Day 6. Excursion in Sheki city, transfer to Baku

Breakfast at the hotel

Sheki was one of the most majestic cities of the East in the past and one of the most ancient cities of Transcaucasia. There are many historical and architectural monuments in Sheki. Since ancient times, the city produced weapons, jewelry and copper items, engaged in pottery, silky and carpet weaving. A lot of Sheki hand-made masterpieces were known not only in Azerbaijan. A visit to the magnificent palace of **Sheki Khans**, a silk shop, a workshop for the production of delicious Sheki pakhlava, a workshop for the manufacture of **Shebeke** (a mosaic of glass and wood decorating the **Palace of Sheki Khans**). Then we will visit the ancient hotel "**Karavan-Saray**", where caravans' traders of the ancient times loved to rest on their road.

Lunch (for additional charge)

Arrival in Baku and lunch (for additional charge)

Free time

Dinner (for additional charge)

Overnight in Baku

Day 7. Baku, transfer to the airport and departure

Breakfast

Free time

Check-out from the hotel

Airport transfer

Tour cost

Number of Persons		Single	Double\PP
2	Persons	\$917	\$793
4	Persons	\$692	\$568
6	Persons	\$587	\$463
8	Persons	\$564	\$441
10	Persons	\$527	\$403
12	Persons	\$502	\$378
14	Persons	\$484	\$360
16	Persons	\$471	\$347

Price includes:

- Accommodation in 3+ * hotel: 4 nights in Baku, 5* hotel 1 night in Gabala and 4* hotel 1 night in Sheki
- Breakfasts at the hotels
- Transfers: Airport – Hotel – Airport
- Comfortable transportation during the excursions
- Services of English speaking guide
- Entrance fees to museums
- Bottle of water per person per day

Price does not include:

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

***Blackout dates changeable and will be provided by additional request at the end of the year**

Accommodation and upgrade:

The cost of the tour provides accommodation in comfortable hotels of 3 * category. Accommodation in Baku in hotels **Diplomat, Auroom or Aksent Hotel**. Accommodation in Gabala is provided at the hotel **Gabala City Hotel**. In Sheki - **Macara Hotel**. At additional payment on request, the hotel category in Baku and other cities can be upgraded.

Check-in and check-out policy:

- * For the guests `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:

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 working days in the regular mode of \$35 and \$75 for 1 working day in case of urgent visa.

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