



## Baku



Baku is the capital, largest city, and largest port of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus region. It is located on the southern shore of the Absheron Peninsula, that projects into the Caspian Sea.

The city consists of two principal parts: the downtown and the old Inner City. Baku's urban population at the beginning of 2009 was estimated at just over two million people. Among these are the townships on islands in the Baku Bay and the town of Oil Rocks built on stilts in the Caspian Sea, 60 km (37 mi) away from Baku. The Inner City of Baku along with the Shirvanshah Palace and Maiden Tower were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000. The city is the scientific, cultural and industrial center of Azerbaijan.

## Sheki



Sheki is situated in northern Azerbaijan on the southern part of the Greater Caucasus mountain range, 325 km (200 miles) from Baku. The population of Sheki is 63,000. Sheki is surrounded by snowy peaks of the Greater Caucasus, in some places reaching 3000–3600 m. Sheki has one of the greatest density of cultural resources and monuments that include 2700 years of Azerbaijani history. The city boasts a lot of houses with red roofs. In pop culture, probably the most famous feature of Shakinians are their nice sense of humor and comic tales.

## Fascinating Caucasus

**Countries:** Georgia Azerbaijan

**Period from:** April to October

**Duration:** 12 days, 11 nights

**Tour category:** Cultural

Azerbaijan and Georgia - the Caucasian land of hospitality. Visit the capitals of these three countries is the perfect introduction to their great culture, rich spirit and diversity. We make the way from Baku, Azerbaijan to Tbilisi, Georgia, through the rolling hills and lush valleys, beautiful and scenic Caucasus Mountains and lakes, ancient architectural monuments and fascinating villages.

### Day 1- Excursion across Baku

Start exploring Azerbaijan with a city tour of Baku, which is one of the oldest and biggest cities in the East for antiquity, territory and population. We'll visit the Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah Palace and Maiden Tower, UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Inner City (Icheri Sheher) has preserved much of its 12th century defensive walls. The 12th century Maiden Tower, built over earlier structures dating from the 7th to 6th centuries BC, and the 15th century Shirvanshah' Palace, one of the pearls of Azerbaijan's architecture. Juma Mosque and the Carpet Museum. We will have a walk in Naberezhny Park and along Baku Boulevard, the second largest one in Europe. On Boulevard we'll get a boat and make trip on it along Baku Bay. We'll be introduced with the interesting facts and legends of the largest lake in the world better known as Caspian Sea. Overnight in Baku.

### Day 2: Baku / Absheron Peninsula

Leaving for a tour in Absheron Peninsula. Ateshgah, the Fire Worshippers' Temple is located in the village of Surakhany. It was built on the land where natural gas burned eternally and worshipped by Zoroastrian believers who travelled from the province of Multan in India to visit this sacred place. These ancient fires are believed to have given Azerbaijan its name, which is thought by some researchers to mean the "Land of Fires". Visit also well preserved ancient castles of Absheron Peninsula dated 12th-13th c.c. There are several fine medieval castles - one each at Amirajan and Nardaran and two at Mardakan - apparently built for defense by the Shirvan Shahs in the 14th century. Overnight in Baku.

### Day 3: Baku / Sheki (360 KM)

Sheki is one of the most famous and ancient places of Azerbaijan. Situated 700 m (2297 ft.) above sea level like an amphitheatre surrounded by the mountains and forests of oak trees, this ancient city was long famed as a silk centre and an important stop on the Great Silk Route. There is an assumption that the name of the town goes back to the ethnonym of the Saks, who reached the territory of Azerbaijan in the 7th century BC. We'll start our Sheki tour from visiting the 18th century Khan's summer palace (entrance fee: 4 USD) with magnificent frescos and exquisite stained glass work. Sheki History museum is famous with artifacts from several periods. Also visit the Albanian church located in Kish village. Legend says that the church was built in 78 AD, but the researchers place it a few centuries

## Kish



Kish is a village and municipality in the Sheki Region of Azerbaijan. It is located approximately 5 km north of Sheki. It has a population of 6,244. According to historians, in the 1st century A.D. St. Elishe, a disciple of Thaddeus of Edessa, arrived to a place called Gis, where he built a church and recited a liturgy. The church became the "spiritual center and the place of enlightenment of people of the East".

## Tbilisi



According to an old legend, the present-day territory of Tbilisi was covered by forests as late as 458. One widely accepted variant of the legend of Tbilisi's founding states that King Vakhtang I Gorgasali of Georgia went hunting in the heavily wooded region with a falcon. The King's falcon allegedly caught or injured a pheasant during the hunt, after which both birds fell into a nearby hot spring and died from burns. King Vakhtang became so impressed with the hot springs that he decided to cut down the forest and build a city on the location. The name Tbilisi derives from the Old Georgian word "Tpili", meaning warm.

## Mtskheta



Mtskheta, one of the oldest cities of the country of Georgia, is located approximately 20

later. Upon our checking-in at the hotel, we'll enjoy the farewell dinner, tasting traditional Azeri cuisine dishes. Overnight in Sheki.

### Day 4: Sheki / Gremi/ Telavi/ Signaghi (370 KM)

Depart from Azerbaijan to Georgia. Change transport at the border in Lagodekhi. Drive to Gremi and visit Gremi monastery complex which was a very important place on the silk road. Drive to Telavi and then to Tsinandali and visit Palace of Al. Chavchavadze, famous Georgian poet (entrance fee: from USD 3 to USD 12). Tasting of the Georgian wine here. Finally we will drive to Signaghi to Love town. Overnight in Signaghi.

### Day 5: Signaghi / David Gareji / Tbilisi (300KM)

After breakfast have Signaghi tour. Afterwards visiting the Bodbe Monastery of the 9th century, we'll take our way to David Gareji Monastery Complex, one of the most important landmarks of Georgia. This site is characterized by a unique combination of the historic architecture, prehistoric archaeological sites, rich paleontological fields and important bio-geographical features. Finally drive to Tbilisi. Afterwards drive to Tbilisi. Overnight in Tbilisi.

### Day 6: Tbilisi tour

We will visit the Old Tbilisi Sulfur Baths, Georgian Orthodox and Armenian Gregorian churches, and a Jewish synagogue and a Turkish mosque side by side, reflecting Tbilisi's acceptance and tolerance of different religions. We can also see a recent monument, the Tbilisi Sameba Cathedral, the largest cathedral in the Caucasus. Tour includes following sights: Metekhi Church is erected on the cliff, overlooking the Mtkvari River. There is a statue of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, founder of Tbilisi, in front of the church. The church dates back to the 12th century and has a diverse history, connected with Mongol invasions and political repressions of the Soviet Empire. The colorful Darejani Palace is also situated on the cliff, like the nest of a swallow. The Sulfur Baths are located in Old Tbilisi, on the other side of the river, opposite Darejani Palace. Tbilisi was named after the natural Sulphur springs. Have lunch in Georgian restaurant. The Orthodox Narikala St. Nikolas Church is in the same district. The church is furnished with frescoed portraits of martyrs and scenes from the Bible. It is wrapped in a defensive Narikala fortress, established in the fourth century. We can walk up the stairs of the fortress and overlook Tbilisi. Walk down the path from the hill and on cobbled Leselidze Street, we come across the 13th century Armenian St. George Church and a Jewish synagogue with an elegant facade. On the opposite side of the street is Sioni Church, leading to the bank of the Mtkvari. Here you discover Shardeni Street with its fashionable cozy cafes and art galleries. Walking we will come across the Anchiskhati church, the oldest church in Tbilisi keeping the miraculous icon of Jesus Christ. Finally the tour takes you to Rustaveli Avenue, where attractions such as the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Parliament, Rustaveli Theatre, different art galleries and cafes will draw your attention and provide a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Drive to Open Air Ethnographic Museum, place, where are built all kinds of Georgian national old country-houses and castles (entrance fee: USD 1, 70). Overnight in Tbilisi.

### Day 7: Tbilisi – Kazbegi – Gudauri(220 km)

After breakfast drive to Gudauri. Georgian Ski resort. Visit Ananuri Castle and monastery. Jinali water reservoir. Ananuri ensemble of XVII century. It comprises a tower, small-domed church, big-domed temple and a bell-tower. The ensemble overlooks the artificial reservoir of Zhinali built in 1971. Mtiuleti, the land of the mountains, historical province in eastern Georgia, on the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. Khevi is a small historical-geographic area in northeastern Georgia. It is included in the modern-day Kazbegi district, Mtskheta-

kilometers north of Tbilisi at the confluence of the Aragvi and Kura rivers. The city is now the administrative centre of the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region. Due to its historical significance and numerous ancient monuments, the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta" became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

## Kutaisi



Kutaisi is Georgia's second largest city and the capital of the western region of Imereti. It is 221 km to the west of Tbilisi. Kutaisi was the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Colchis. Archeological evidence indicates that the city functioned as the capital of the kingdom of Colchis as early as the second millennium BC. It is widely believed by historians that when Apollonius Rhodius was writing about Jason and the Argonauts and their legendary journey to Colchis, Kutaisi/Aia was the final destination of the Argonauts and the residence of King Aeetes

## Batumi



Batumi is a seaside city on the Black Sea coast and capital of Adjara, an autonomous republic in southwest Georgia. Sometimes considered Georgia's second capital, with a population of 121,806, Batumi serves as an important port and a commercial center. It is situated in a subtropical zone, rich in agricultural produce such as citrus fruit and tea. While industries of the city include shipbuilding, food processing, and light manufacturing, most of its economy revolves around tourism.

## Kazbegi



Mtianeti region. Located on the northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus mountains, it comprises three gorges of the rivers Truso, Tergi and Snostsq'ali. Visit Holy Trinity Church of Gergeti of 14th century - It is built on the slope of Mt. Mkinvartsveri (top of glacier), on the left bank of the river Tergi. It is the monument built on the highest spot in Europe. Gergeti is a domed church with a bell-tower. Afterwards drive to Dariali Gorge. (NOTE: to drive to Trinity Church we need 4X4 cars, and in case of the group travel, when group is travelling by bus, we can rent 4X4 cars on the spot and price is USD 13 per person). Drive back to Gudauri. **Dinner and overnight in Gudauri**

### Day 8: Gudauri – Uplistsikhe – Borjomi – Akhaltsikhe (300 KM)

After breakfast drive to Uplistsikhe, town in rock. Afterwards drive to Borjomi and taste famous Georgian Mineral water "Borjomi". The next spot is Akhaltsikhe, new removed town in Samtskhe-Javakheti region. In Akhaltsikhe we will visit Rabati fortress, which includes many sights. Overnight in Akhaltsikhe.

### Day 9: Akhaltsikhe – Vardzia – Kutaisi(320 KM)

After breakfast we drive to Vardzia. Our first stop on is Khertvisi Fortress, dramatically situated on a cliff above the confluence of two major rivers. Later we enjoy a leisurely visit to one of Georgia's most significant sites: the cave town of Vardzia (entrance fee: USD 1,7). Established by King Giorgi III in the 12th century as a stronghold against the Turkish Sultanate (the Turkish border is only 10km away), Vardzia was subsequently developed by his daughter, Tamar (later to become Queen Tamar), who created a cave monastery that became a centre of Georgian culture. This network of caves above the Mtkvari (Kura) river once numbered 3,000, with up to 19 tiers in some places. Much of it was destroyed after a huge earthquake in 1456 and only 550 caves have been discovered. There are numerous churches, meeting halls, refectories and wine cellars, all interconnected by tunnels and stairways. Finally drive to Kutaisi. Overnight in Kutaisi

### Day 10: Kutaisi – Batumi (180 KM)

Kutaisi is second largest and parliament city of Georgia. Arriving in Kutaisi, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Colchis, we check into our guesthouse for a two night stay. It was here that Jason stole King Aeetes the Golden Fleece when he fell in love with the king's daughter Medea. Kutaisi has always been an important town throughout the ages and for many years was the capital of Georgia, when Tbilisi was occupied by the Arabs. The period between the reigns of King Bagrat and Queen Tamar (roughly 900 – 1200) was the golden age for Kutaisi and most of the significant buildings date from this time. Now it is the main city of the Imereti region and here the people are renowned for their sense of humor and also a special kind of 'khachapuri' – the cheese bread unique to Georgia. In Kutaisi we will visit Bagrati cathedral and Gelati monastery complex, both in UNESCO heritage. Afterwards drive to Batumi. Finally we will have Batumi city tour and free time. Overnight in Batumi.

### Day 11: Batumi – Mtskheta – Tbilisi (380 KM)

After breakfast we will visit Batumi Botanical Garden. Afterwards drive to Mtskheta, the spiritual heart of Georgia. Here we visit what is considered to be the most sacred place in Georgia, the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The 9th century basilica contains the grave of Sidonia, who was said to have been buried holding Christ's robe. We also visit the 6th century Jvari church. Farewell dinner at the national restaurant in Tbilisi with folk show. Overnight in Tbilisi.

Kazbegi ( now called Stepantsminda), is a small town in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region of north-eastern Georgia. Historically and ethnographically, the town is part of the Khevi province. It is the center of the Kazbegi Municipality. The town is dominated by large mountains on all sides. The most notable mountain of the region, Mount Kazbek, lies immediately to the west of town.

## Day 12: Transfer to Airport. End of tour

For more details:

15, Nakhchivani str., Jupiter Plaza Baku, Azerbaijan, AZ 1065

Tel: (+99412) 4379090, Mob: (+99450/55/70) 263 1234

Email: [incoming2@exploreazerbaijan.com](mailto:incoming2@exploreazerbaijan.com)

[www.exploreazerbaijan.az](http://www.exploreazerbaijan.az)

### Price:

Number of tourists	Price per person in USD Azerbaijan Part	Price per person in USD Georgian Part	Total price in USD
2	883	1828	2711
4	563	1210	1773
6	433	1023	1456
8	404	915	1319
10	358	848	1206
15	306	814	1120
20	272	752	1024
Single supplement add	95	289	384

#### Azerbaijan Part included:

- Accommodation by program
- Transportation service
- English speaking guide
- Entry fee
- One bottle water per person per day
- BB meals in hotels

#### Georgia part included:

- Transportation as per program
- English speaking guide
- 3 overnights in Tbilisi
- 1 overnight in Signaghi
- 1 overnight in Gudauri
- 1 overnight in Akhaltsikhe
- 1 overnight in Kutaisi
- 1 overnight in Batumi
- BB meals in hotels
- 1 dinner in Gudauri
- Farewell dinner in Tbilisi with folk show
- One bottle of mineral water per person per day

Price excluded:

- Lunch and dinner
- Museum entrance fees
- Travel insurance

## Itinerary & Map

### Azerbaijan



### Georgia



#### Lagodekhi - Sheki- Kish – Lahij - Ismayilly – Shamakhy - Baku

DAYS	SITES	DISTANCE, KM/ML	TIME IN TRAFFIC +/-
Day 1	Baku	0 / 0	---
Day 2	Baku City tour and Absheron Peninsula	60 / 38	40 min
Day 3	Baku – Sheki	360 / 225	5 hours
Day 4	Sheki – Lagodekhi Gremi/ Telavi/ Sighnaghi	370 / 69	5 hours
Day 5	Sighnaghi / David Gareji / Tbilisi	300 km.	7 hours
Day 6	Tbilisi tour	100 km.	30 min.
Day 7	Tbilisi – Kazbegi – Gudauri(220 km)	220 km.	6 hours
Day 8	Gudauri – Uplistsikhe – Borjomi – Akhaltsikhe	300 km.	6 hours.
Day 9	Akhalsikhe – Vardzia – Kutaisi	320 km.	6,5 hours
Day 10	Kutaisi – Batumi	180 km	3 hours
Day 11	Batumi – Mtskheta – Tbilisi	380 km	7 hours
Day 12	Tbilisi – Tbilisi Airport	25 km	30 min.

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## **Visa**

### **Azerbaijan:**

Visa upon arrival in International Airports of Azerbaijan can be obtained only by Turkish and Israel citizens. Citizens of other countries have to obtain visa before arrival through consulates of Azerbaijan around the world.

To obtain tourist visa to Azerbaijan you will need an official Letter of Invitation (LOI) or Tourist Voucher from our travel agency. Procedures and prices are different and depend of citizenship and consulate location. Please contact with our managers at list 6 weeks before to arrange our visa to Azerbaijan.

### **Georgia:**

Foreign nationals, who permanently reside in the USA, the Republic of Lithuania, Swiss Confederation, Federative Republic of Germany, Republic of Korea, Czech Republic, Republic of Hungary, Republic of Poland, Republic of Slovenia, Kingdom of Denmark, Island, Kingdom of Norway, Kingdom of Sweden, Kingdom of Spain, Republic of Bulgaria, Slovak Republic, Republic of Romania, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia and possess a document certifying permanent residence in one of these countries, do not need visa to enter and stay on the territory of Georgia up to 360 days.

For more information please, check here: [http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=96](http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=96)

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## **Hotels**

### **Azerbaijan:**

Tour price was calculated with 3 and 4 star hotels in Baku and regions. Hotel category can be upgraded to 5\* by tourists request. Accommodations in following hotels are suggested:

Baku: Noah's Ark 3\*, Amber Hotel 4\*

Ismayilli: Yeddi Gozel 4\*, Karvansara 3\*

Sheki: Karvansara 3\*

### **Georgia:**

Sighnaghi: Solomoni 3\*, Pirosmani 3\*, Kabadoni 4\*

Tbilisi: GTM Kapan 3\*, Astoria Palace 3\*, Penthouse 3\*, Prima Vera 4\*

Gudauri: Free Rider 3\*, Carpe Diem 4\*

Akhaltsikhe: Lomsia 4\*

Kutaisi: Argo Palace 3\*, Max comfort 3\*, Tskaltubo Spa resort 4\*

Batumi: Era Palace 4\*

Breakfast is included to the price at all hotels. Laundry service is available for the extra price. Internet in regions is very limited and not available at some hotels. Check in time 14:00, check out 12:00. Late checkout is available by additional request.

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## **Practical Information**

### **Foreign Exchange**

Up-to-date information on exchange rates can be obtained here: <http://currency.boom.ge/?lng=en>

Local Currency: Manat in Azerbaijan, Lari in Georgia

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.

## Climate in Azerbaijan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
 Avg. Temperature	6	5	8	15	18	30	32	30	20	17	12	8
 Avg. Max Temperature	10	8	12	19	22	30	35	37	25	21	16	12
 Avg. Min Temperature	3	2	4	10	13	25	30	33	16	13	8	6
 Avg. Rain Days	4	5	3	3	4	3	5	4	3	4	2	5
 Avg. Snow Days	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Climate in Georgia

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
 Avg. Temperature	6	5	8	15	18	21	24	24	20	17	12	8
 Avg. Max Temperature	10	8	12	19	22	26	28	29	25	21	16	12
 Avg. Min Temperature	3	2	4	10	13	16	20	20	16	13	8	6
 Avg. Rain Days	4	5	3	3	4	3	5	4	3	4	2	5
 Avg. Snow Days	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Vaccinations & Protection

Nothing compulsory

## Electric Supply & Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in Azerbaijan see the link <http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our customers. You should ensure that your policy covers you for medical expenses and repatriation.

## Packing for your trip

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

## Luggage

Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. One main piece of baggage and daypack. Total allowance: 20 kg.

## Clothing

Pack essentially for 'Hot Conditions'. Weather is changeable in the north and mountains; it can be cool especially at night, bring a warmer jacket. Raingear is essential at all times. In remote parts of Caucasus you should avoid shorts and vest tops; long trousers or skirts are ideal. A headscarf is essential for visiting churches and mosques.

## Footwear

Comfortable shoes for visiting sites and hilly towns; sandals; lightweight walking/trail boots for optional day walks.

**Equipment**

Swimsuit, Sunhat, Sun Cream and Sunglasses.

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**Comments**

While it is our intention to follow the itinerary printed, tours within Azerbaijan may be subject to change a bit. The infrastructure for tourism is still developing in this region.

You'll need some extra money to cover meals not included in the tour price, other sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry. Approximately USD 30 per day per person.

Local food is not expensive and you can choose local national restaurants and small cafes to eat, approximate menu price for one person is from USD 10.

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