

Itinerary for Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia • Expat Explore

Start Point:

Hotel in Baku,
Please contact us
from 14:00 hrs

End Point:

Hotel in Yerevan,
Please contact us
10:00 hrs

DAY 1: Arrival in Baku



Start in Baku, the largest city on the Caspian Sea and capital of Azerbaijan. Today you have time to settle in and explore at leisure. Think of the city as a combination of Paris and Dubai, a place that offers both history and contemporary culture, and an intriguing blend of east meets west. The heart of the city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, surrounded by a fortified wall and pleasant pedestrianised boulevards that offer fantastic shopping opportunities. Attractions include the local Carpet Museum and the National Museum of History and Azerbaijan.

Experiences

Arrival. Join up with the tour at our starting hotel in Baku. If you arrive early you'll have free time to explore the city. The waterfront is a great place to stroll this evening, with a cooling sea breeze and plenty of entertainment options and restaurants.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✕ Lunch: ✕ Dinner: ✕

Accommodation

Hotel Royal Garden

DAY 2: Baku - Gobustan National Park - Mud Volcano Safari - Baku Old City Tour



After breakfast, dive straight into exploring the history of Azerbaijan! Head south from Baku to Gobustan National Park. This archaeological reserve is home to mud volcanoes and over 600,000 ancient rock engravings and paintings. After exploring this national historical landmark of Azerbaijan, we make our way back to Baku city and embark on a sightseeing tour. Then, it's onto the iconic Icheri Sheher, the Old (or Inner) City of Baku. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and includes the Palace of the Shirvanshahs and Maiden Tower. Wind down after a day of exploring by walking along the flower-lined central boulevards of the city. Finally, make a stop at the updated Fountains Square, an area famous for it's dozens of fountains and numerous shopping boutiques.

Experiences

Gobustan National Park archaeological reserve. Gobustan is a rich archaeological monument in Azerbaijan. You can view rock engravings dating back between 5,000-40,000 years here. Gobustan was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007.

Mud volcano safari. Travel along gravel roads through Gobustan National Park to experience the iconic mud volcanoes. Azerbaijan is known as the 'land of fire', and nearly half of the world's mud volcanoes are located in Azerbaijan.

Baku city sightseeing tour. Explore the city of Baku as you learn about the history and culture of the Azerbaijani people. Inhabited for centuries, it has been described as an incredible open-air museum. Preserved in its 12th Century walls, you will find a number of important cultural and natural landmarks. The old city itself and sights like Shirvanshah's' Palace and Maiden Tower (Giz Galasi) are on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✕ Dinner: ✕

Accommodation

Hotel Royal Garden

DAY 3: Shamakhi - Sheki



First sight of the day is Shamakhi, an ancient city of Azerbaijan, to see where the first dynasty of the state of Shirvan was founded. Visit Yeddi Gumbez, the mausoleum known as the Seven Domes, where the remains of the last of the Shamakhi Dynasty lies. We'll then visit Juma Mosque, the oldest and largest mosque in Azerbaijan. Our next stop for the day is Kish, one of the oldest villages in Azerbaijan. We visit the Mother of Alban church and ancient cemetery that dates back all the way to the 6th Century. Once we reach our final destination, Sheki, we'll visit the Palace of Sheki Khans.

Experiences

Yeddi Gumbez mausoleum in Shamakhi. Catch a glimpse of how representatives of the Shirvan Dynasty lived during the 9th to 16th Centuries. Not only was Shamakhi one of the main cities of its time, but it was also considered to be one of the most beautiful cities of the Orient. The Yeddi Gumbez Mausoleum in Shamakhi is where the Shirvan Dynasty rulers were laid to rest. Also known as the Seven Domes, the monument gets its name from the number of gravestones in the crypt. The deserted cemetery has an air of mystery and the half-destroyed domes look as if they've grown from the ground below.

Juma Mosque in Shamakhi. The oldest and largest mosque in Azerbaijan, legend states that it was built in the 8th century when Shamakhi was chosen as residence by an Arabian caliph. Built more than 1,200 years ago Shamakhi Juma mosque still remains one of the largest religious structures in the Caucasus.

The Albanian temple, 'Mother of Alban', and its ancient cemetery in Kish. Explore the 6th Century church, Mother of Alban, and learn about the unique history of its ancient cemetery. The excavated burial places are covered with glass cupolas and you can see the Bronze Age human skeletons within.

Sheki. Sheki is located in a picturesque mountain area rich in narrow gorges and green valleys. It offers a unique slice of Azerbaijani lifestyle with a number of museums, arts and crafts and souvenir shops. The most famous of them all is by far the summer and winter palaces of the Khan, which we'll visit.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✓ Dinner: ✕

Accommodation

Hotel Issam

DAY 4: Sheki - Kakheti - Khareba Winery - Signagi



Today, we cross the border into the Kakheti region of eastern Georgia. Our first stop is the Khareba winery for a local wine tasting experience. Georgia has a wine history that dates back more than 8,000 years! Continue to Gremi, the once glorious capital of the kingdom of Kakheti to see the church and castles erected in the 16th Century. Soak in the views of the Alazan valley before heading to Signagi, Georgia's city of love. This royal town is surrounded by a wall of 23 towers and 6 gates that used to connect it with Europe and Asia. Take time this afternoon to stroll the cobbled streets, see the rustic buildings and shop from local vendors.

Experiences

Visit the Khareba winery in Kakheti province, and tour the tunnels of the cellars followed by wine tasting. Located on the plains of the Alazani and Iori rivers, Kakheti is surrounded by the Caucasian mountains. This is also known as the iconic destination for Georgian wines. Georgian winemakers make use of both ancient and contemporary methods of winemaking. Tour the tunnels of the Khareba winery cellars and experience how Georgian wine is made today.

Gremi architectural complex. This 16th Century architectural complex is a must-see with the sights of the citadel and Church of the Archangels. These architectural wonders are the remains of the once-thriving city of Gremi, the capital of the Kingdom of Kakheti in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Signagi. A fortifying wall was built in the 18th century by King Erekle II. Surrounding the town for almost 5km, it has 23 towers and 6 gates, through which Georgia was connected to Europe and Asia by various trade routes. Stroll the cosy cobbled streets of Signagi and enjoy amazing views of pastel-coloured houses and the picturesque surrounding valleys.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✕ Dinner: ✕

Accommodation

Hotel Ambasadori

DAY 5: Signagi - Tbilisi



Venture to the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi! While exploring the city a memorable stop is the 13th Century Metekhi Church. Other sights to explore include the Sulfur Baths and the 4th Century Narikala Fortress. Why not wander through Sioni cathedral, and follow the history in the Tbilisi National Museum.

Experiences

Walking tour of Tbilisi. Take your time as you explore all the sights that Tbilisi has to offer. Capture panoramic views from all over the city, as Tbilisi is surrounded by ravines, canyons and valleys. Absorb the Eastern influence as you explore the many bazaars. In the Old Town, you'll have

the chance to take a look at the healing powers of the Sulfur Baths. For centuries these waters were used to remedy various ailments, including skin conditions and arthritis.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✕ Dinner: ✕

Accommodation

Hotel City

DAY 6: Kazbegi - Tbilisi



This morning we drive along one of the most intriguing roads in the Caucasus! The Georgian Military Highway is the historic route that connects Georgia to Russia. On your way, you will pass the most incredible scenery. From remote villages to castles and other sights that are steeped in history. Stop and take in the significant Ananuri fortress complex, built in the late Feudal times, and the remarkably scenic location on the foreland by the Aragvi River. Next, we make our way to the Ananuri Fortress. This 13th Century church complex was once the castle and seat of the eristavis (Dukes) of Aragvi. The last part of the day is a scenic adventure. We drive uphill in four-wheel-drive vehicles, through narrow gorges and unspoiled mountains, until we find the prize of Georgia's isolated Gergeti Trinity church.

Experiences

Drive on the Georgian Military Highway. Drive on the highway that connects the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, and the Russian Federation territory of North Ossetia. As the quickest route across the Caucasus, it's existence can be traced back to the 1st Century, and has been used by assailants and merchants alike.

Ananuri fortress and architectural complex. This complex was home of the Aragvi Dynasty from the 13th Century to the 18th Century, when the peasants revolted and invited King Teimuraz II to rule directly over them. The complex consists of three churches, two castles and a bell tower. The upper castle is well preserved, while the lower fortification is mostly in ruins.

Gergeti Trinity Church, Kazbegi. Take an adventurous drive to the Gergeti Trinity Church in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. This religious wonder has ranked as one of the most beautiful churches in the world and is located near the village of Gergeti. The magnificent setting in the Caucasus mountains makes this experience something quite unique.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✓ Dinner: ✕

Accommodation

Hotel City

DAY 7: Mtskheta - Gori - Tbilisi



Mtskheta is our first stop of the day. Inhabited since before 1,000 BC, Mtskheta was once the capital of the early Kingdom of Iberia (Eastern Georgia today). Drive up to Jvari monastery, a Georgian Orthodox monastery built on a hill. Shortly after the adoption of Christianity, an enormous wooden cross was erected on this site. In the second half of the 6th Century, a small church was built beside the Holy Cross. The church complex has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

Next up, is a visit to Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. This religious centre dates back to the 6th Century and is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Learn more about Georgian architecture and the tombs of Tbilisi's founder located inside. Continue to Inner Kartli province, to the town of Gori. This Georgian town is famous for being the birthplace of Joseph Stalin. See and explore the Joseph Stalin Museum and the house he was born in.

Experiences

Jvari Monastery, Mtskheta. Jvari monastery is a gorgeous stone building, which overlooks the two Mtskheta rivers. Jvari is an important landmark in the ancient city of Mtskheta. It's also one of the most important pilgrimage sites in all of Caucasus.

Russia-Georgia Friendship Monument. This colourful tiled mural monument was constructed in 1983 to celebrate the bicentennial of the Treaty of Georgievsk, which established eastern Georgia as a protectorate of Russia.

Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Mtskheta. Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is one of the largest church buildings in Georgia. It's also regarded as a main cathedral for the Georgian Orthodox church. The "Life-Giving Pillar Cathedral" is an architectural wonder and was founded in 1010, and also where Georgia's first church once stood.

Stalin Museum & Gori. Visit the birthplace of Joseph Stalin, a Soviet revolutionary and one of history's most brutal dictators. Stalin was born here in Gori, Georgia in 1878 and lived here for the first four years of his life. The museum is dedicated to his life. Here, you can view memorabilia and learn about his Georgian roots, as well as the history of the Soviet Union.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✗ Dinner: ✗

Accommodation

Hotel City

DAY 8: Sadakhlo - Akhtala - Odzun - Qefo



Armenia is on the cards after breakfast today! First stop after we cross the border is the Akhtala Monastery, known for its 13th Century artistic frescoes. After exploring, we continue to our lunch stop of the day - Odzun, a historic village located on the Debed river bank. Enjoy an included traditional lunch served by a local family in their home. Also, take the chance to learn more about the family's beehives and how they make honey.

Experiences

Akhtala Monastery. This 10th Century Armenian Apostolic Church is a fortified monastic complex, one of the best-preserved in Armenia, and known for its highly artistic frescoes. The construction of the monastery's fortress dates as far back as the Bronze and Iron Ages.

Included lunch stop in Odzun. Visit Odzun in the Lori Province of Armenia. Be treated to a traditional sit-down meal with a local family.

Honey demonstration. The local family you visit for lunch live in a village that is completely self-sufficient. It's so remote that there is no supermarket so they have to produce all of their food, including delicious, organic honey. See how they harvest the honey from the hives and sample some of the delicious nectar for yourself.

Included Meals

Accommodation

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✓ Dinner: ✓

Qefo Hotel

Gayane Hotel

DAY 9: Haghpat - Molokan - Dilijan



Start the day with a gentle walk to explore the UNESCO World Heritage site of Haghpat, visiting a WWII war memorial along the way. The medieval monastery complex overlooks the Debed river gorge and provides incredible views of the surrounding hills. Travel through the region inhabited by the Molokan people. Molokans are the largest minority in Armenia, exiled from Russia in the 19th Century. Dine with locals in a traditional Molokan home. Journey through the Dilijan National Park to make it to the spa town of Dilijan. Known for its spas and traditional craft workshops, Dilijan is surrounded by forests and located in the Argstev gorge. With marvellous views, it's no wonder it's known as the Armenian Switzerland!

Experiences

Haghpat. Take in the fascinating panoramic views, including the dramatic landscapes and villages, from this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Construction on this monastery complex started in 976 and finished in 991! The main building is known as Surp Nishan and is also the oldest part of the structure. Over the centuries, buildings were added and later the complex had doubled in size from the original. The monks from this Monastery hand-copied books, to study subjects like science, theology and painting.

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Molokan village. Molokanism was the religious expression of a social protest against slavery and the Russian Orthodox Church. The community of Molokans in Dilijan settled here in the 19th century, from their home country of Russia. Explore the traditional and unique way of life for the “Milk Drinkers”.

Dilijan. This beautiful resort town is billed as the 'Switzerland of Armenia', and is surrounded by the alpine forests of Dilijan National park. Visit the most historic street in the old town of Dilijan, with craft shops selling pottery, souvenirs and woodcraft. The architecture on this street resembles traditional Armenian architecture of the 19th century.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✓ Dinner: ✓

Accommodation

BW Dilijan Hotel

DAY 10: Dilijan - Sevan Lake - Geghard - Garni - Yerevan



This morning, it’s a short drive to Lake Sevan. This is the highest freshwater lake in the Caucasus. Visit the Sevanavank Monastery, from where you can enjoy the breathtaking scenery of Sevan and surrounds. Drive to the UNESCO-protected Geghard Monastery. This ancient chapel was originally founded as a small cave chapel as early as the 4th Century! We'll make a photo stop near to the border with Turkey for incredible views of Mount Ararat, the place where Noah's Ark is said to rest.

Continue to the Garni Pagan Temple, located in the State Khosrov Reserve. This is the only temple that remained after the adoption of Christianity. Take the opportunity to listen to the Duduk - an Armenian instrument made of apricot wood. Its sound is said to have human-voice quality.

Experiences

Lake Sevan. Explore the largest lake of Armenia with its many uncovered forts and artefacts. Some as old as 2,000 years! Lake Sevan covers 5% of Armenia's land surface. Take a look at the Sevanavank Monastery, one of the most-visited in all of Armenia.

Sevanavank Monastery. This iconic monastic complex offers beautiful views of Lake Sevan and is one of the most visited sights in Armenia.

Geghard Monastery. Set foot in the "Monastery of the spear", named after the spear that stabbed Jesus. Completely surrounded by towering cliffs, the original chapel was carved out of rock in the 4th Century! Later, it was expanded to a full monastery of elegant Armenian stonework in 1215. Today, it still welcomes hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year.

Garni Pagan Temple. Garni Temple is the only pagan temple in Armenia. It is also a well-known symbol of pre-Christian Armenia. Observe the incredible rock formations in Garni Canyon, along the Azat River, and hear the music of an Armenian Duduk. The Garni Gorge, formed by the Azat River, is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Mount Ararat. Make a photo stop at a vantage point for excellent views of Mount Ararat, across the border in Turkey. Tradition states that Noah's Ark came to rest on this mountain following a flood.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✗ Dinner: ✗

Accommodation

Royal Plaza

DAY 11: Yerevan city tour - Echmiatsin - Yerevan



Today we'll explore Yerevan. Here, a city tour will reveal all the main places of interest. See the sights of Yerevan Cascade, a giant stairway made of limestone and the Matenadaran museum. See the likes of Abovyan Street, the Republic Square and Cafesjian centre of Arts. The last stop is the Yerevanian food market, also the best place to sample some fresh Armenian fruits and sweets. For the last night on tour, sit down for a traditional Armenian meal accompanied by traditional Armenian music and dancing.

Experiences

Yerevan city tour. Visit the highest point in Yerevan to enjoy a breathtaking panorama of the city. Take a look at what the capital and largest city of Armenia has to offer. Besides the fascinating landmarks in the city centre, the landscape is also something to behold. The city of Yerevan is framed by the volcanic peaks of Mount Aragats & Mount Azhdahak. Stop off at a shuka (market), the ideal place to taste the delectable fruits they have on offer. Apricots, pomegranate and many more.

Farewell dinner. Immerse yourself in the culture of Armenia with an included dinner on our last night on tour, with traditional Armenian music and dancing.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✗ Dinner: ✓

Accommodation

Royal Plaza

DAY 12: End of tour



After breakfast, your 12 day Caucasus adventure comes to an end. It’s time to say goodbye to your fellow travellers and remember to share your contact details so that the memories live on through shared photos.

Included Meals

Breakfast: ✓ Lunch: ✕ Dinner: ✕