

Touch the soul of Azerbaijan

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## «THE SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT CRAFTS»

Ethnographic tour

*In any place of Azerbaijan, it is possible to find workshops of national craftsmen, whose secrets for centuries have been passed from generation to generation. This journey will reveal the wonderful world of the Caucasian crafts – overflows of silk, ringing of copper dishes and patterns of the fabulous beauty of the Azerbaijani carpets. The opportunity to participate in the craft process will leave a piece of the soul of Azerbaijan in your heart!*



Tour validity: **01.01.2022-01.06.2022**

Duration: **7 days / 6 nights**

**Tour program:**

**Day #1**

- Arrival in Baku
- Greeting guests at the airport, transfer and accommodation at the hotel

After greeting the group at the Heydar Aliyev international airport, the guests will be accommodated at **Promenade Hotel** located in the city center, opposite the Seaside Boulevard.



## Day #2

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion to the Highland Park and Old City
- Visit to the carpet weaving workshop «Azer Ilme»
- Lunch at «Firuza» restaurant

**10:00** Our 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, Baku bay and Seaside Boulevard which celebrated its 110-anniversary back in 2019. Then guests will visit **Old City** or **«Icheri Shehen»** with its fortified walls, historic buildings and narrow cobbled streets. Guests will have a chance to explore the main sights of the Old City, including **the Palace of the Shirvanshahs** and the famous **Maiden Tower**. During the walk, you will definitely feel that the air here is filled with magic: the sea air, smelling of salt and oil, is mixed with the aromas of oriental spices and traditional food.







**13:00** Lunch at «Firuza» restaurant

**14:00** After lunch, our acquaintance with Baku is going on with a visit to **«Azer Ilme» carpet weaving workshop**, where modern national carpets are made. The Azerbaijani carpets spread widely throughout the world due to their beauty and quality. The workshop at the modern technological level contributes to the further development of the traditional art of carpet weaving in Azerbaijan. Our traditional carpet weaving has made an invaluable cultural and material contribution to the treasury of world civilization. Here guests may see the entire process of the carpet creation. In the dye shop, it will be shown how the threads are dyed with natural colorants, and then the carpets are woven from these threads in the weaving shop. After this process, they are washed, dried and ironed. Here you may also get familiarized with the work of restore professionals who carefully repair the old samples of national carpet art.

The «Azer Ilme» gallery presents the best examples of the unique Azerbaijani carpets and rugs. In addition, the gallery owns a shop where everyone may buy a carpet which they liked or a silky scarf.



### Day #3

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Exploring the region of Ismayilli with visiting the villages of Lahij and Baskal
- Lunch at the traditional restaurant in Lahij
- Visiting the picturesque village of the craftsmen
- Visiting the «kelagai» workshop with master class
- Accommodation at the hotel in Sheki

**10:00** Tour to the **village of Baskal**. We begin our journey to the **Ismayilli region**, where guests will discover the unique **«kelagai» manufacturing process**. The Azerbaijani «kelagai» is a traditional women's silk scarf. It has defined the age and social status of the woman: the older the woman, the darker are the colors of her scarf, mostly black or blue, whilst young women wear light-

colored scarves, like white, beige or light blue. «Kelagai» is tied in various ways depending on the region. The process of hot dyeing of silk, called «batik», is very complex and has several stages. Our guests will enjoy the work of the «kelagai» masters and also will try themselves in this exciting process.



Next point of our regional journey is the picturesque **village of craftsmen called Lahij**. Lahij is a unique monument of Persian urban planning and an architectural object of the Middle Ages. It is a medieval city with cobbled streets and squares, a well-developed water supply and sewerage system. The village is inhabited by tanners, engravers, potters, blacksmiths, wood and metal carvers, who have been passing their knowledge from generation to generation. During the tour guests will also visit an ancient bridge connecting two villages, a 16th-century stone water supply and samples of dwellings from the 19th century with frescoes. We will also visit the local history museum, where ancient carpets and brass items are stored.

**13:00** Lunch at a local restaurant upon arrival in Lahij



Next on tour is a walk along the village and visit to the workshops of blacksmiths, engravers, potters and other artisans. Guests may also buy some souvenirs or order a thing that will be made on the spot.

After the village of Lahij, the group will move to Sheki for the hotel accommodation.

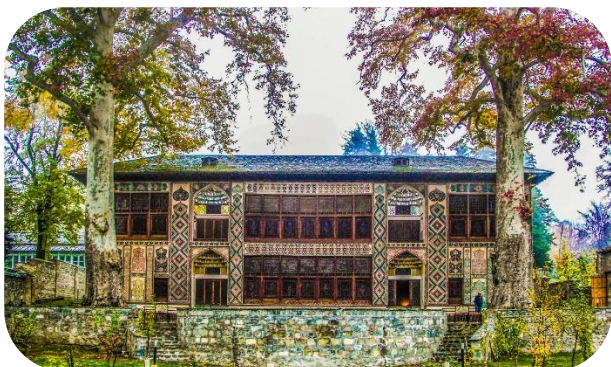
#### **Day #4**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion in Sheki
- Visiting Sheki Khans' Palace and Karvan-Saray
- Master classes in «shebeke» and «pakhlava» workshops
- Traditional lunch in Sheki

**10:00** Acquaintance with the **city of Sheki**. One of the most ancient cities of Azerbaijan, Sheki is located at the altitude of 700 m above the sea level, in the southern foothills of the Greater

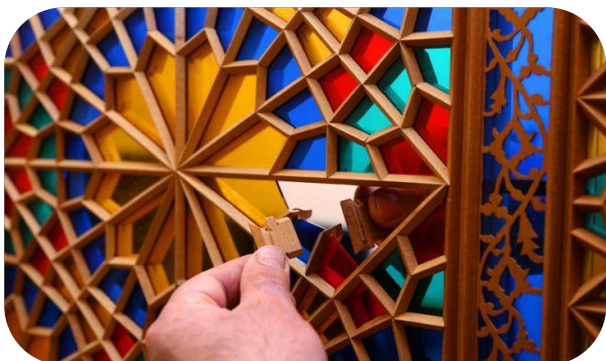


Caucasus. It is famous for the numerous architectural monuments. The city used to be the capital of the Sheki Khanate and was an important staging point on the Great Silk Road. Guests will visit the summer **Palace of the Sheki khans**, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with its magnificent frescoes and exquisite handmade window decorations.



One of the main spots of Sheki is the ancient complex called **the Upper Karvan-Saray**. Karvan-Saray is a historical monument dated 17<sup>th</sup> century which includes the hotel. As the most karvan sarays, it was built in form of castle with single gate, closing of which made it impregnable during dangerous incidents. Karvan-Saray is a rectangular-shaped with a large inner yard and pool area.

**13:00** Lunch at the traditional Sheki restaurant



**14:00** After lunch we will visit the **«shebeke» workshop** (hand-made murals), the workshop for the production of the **famous Sheki pakhlava** and the weaving workshop, where **the unique local «tek ulduz» technique** will be shown. Walking along the streets, guests will also attend various craft workshops.

**18:00** Return to the hotel

## Day #5

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Exploring the Albanian Church in Kish village
- Return to Baku and accommodation at the hotel

**10:00** Our acquaintance with Sheki goes on with a visit to the **Albanian Church**, which is located in **the village of Kish**. According to a legend, it is the first Christian church built not only on the territory of Caucasian Albania, but in the entire Transcaucasia. This place is also remarkable for the burials of people found on the territory of the temple. The structure of their bodies is far different from the current inhabitants of this region. In 2003, the church was renovated with the financial support of the Norwegian government and with the personal efforts of Thor Heyerdahl.

**14:00** Lunch in Sheki and return to Baku



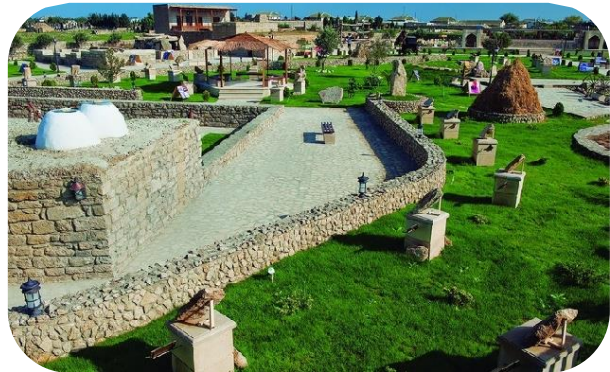
19:00 Accommodation at the hotel and free time



## Day #6

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion to ethnographic open-air museum «Gala»
- Master classes on culinary, pottery, blacksmithing and carpet weaving
- Lunch at «Gala Bazaar» restaurant

**10:00** Tour to **ethnographic museum «Gala»**, located on the Absheron peninsula. An ethnographic open-air museum «Gala» is about 40-minutes' drive from Baku, created 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, with the life of the past, traditions and methods of farming. However, the most important that it is not just an excursion and introduction to the museum exhibits, but the opportunity of immersion into the real ancient life. At the museum area, guests can bake real bread in «tendin», try themselves in clay pottering and carpet weaving.





**13:00** Lunch at «Gala Bazaar» restaurant

«**Gala Bazaar**» is a unique creative and historical restaurant, built in the spirit of the Middle Ages. It is a venue for the dance festivals and concerts, as well as for large-scale exhibitions, performances, fashion shows and other events.



## Day #7

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Check-out from the hotel and visit to «Yashil Bazar»
- Transfer to the airport

After the check-out from the hotel, the group will have a convenient transfer to the Heydar Aliyev international airport. Depending on the time of departure, there is a chance to visit colorful Eastern Bazaar called «**Yashil Bazar**» or «Green Bazaar». The guests may buy some dried fruits, traditional Azerbaijani tea, nuts and sweets there.



## Tour price includes:

- Accommodation at hotel in Baku for 4 nights
- Accommodation at hotel in Sheki for 2 nights
- Breakfasts at the hotels
- Lunches at the national restaurants
- Excursion to the Highland Park and Old City
- Visit to the carpet weaving workshop «Azer Ilme»
- Exploring the region of Ismayilli with visiting the villages of Lahij and Baskal
- «Kelagai» making master class
- Exploring the region of Sheki with visiting Sheki Khans' Palace, Albanian Church, «shebeke» and «pakhlava» workshops

- Excursion to ethnographic open-air museum «Gala» and master classes on culinary, pottery, blacksmithing and carpet weaving
- Entrance tickets to the museums as per the tour program
- Professional English-speaking guide service within the tour
- Full transportation services within the tour including airport-hotel-airport transfers

### **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 12:00: surcharge of 50% of the cost of one day.

### **Children policy:**

\* Children up to 6 years old are free of charge (without an extra bed with accommodation with two adults).

\* Children from 6 up to 12 years - 30% of the cost of the tour.

### **Cancellation and penalties:**

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

\* Cancellation of a confirmed application more than 14 days prior to arrival is not subject to penalties.

\* If you cancel a confirmed application less than 14 days or more than 7 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 7 days or after the date of the planned arrival: a penalty of 100% of the full cost of the tour will be applied.

### **E-Visa to Azerbaijan:**

E-visa is issued **within 3-5 working days** and requires scan copies of the guests' valid passports (6 months to expire date). **E-visa cost is 25 USD**. In case of urgent visa, the cost is 60 USD and the issue takes 1 working day.

### **Terms of entry due to COVID pandemic:**

- Official document on **complete vaccination** (2 doses of vaccine) or official document on **recovery from COVID-19** (6 months since infection)
- **All kind of vaccines are accepted to enter Azerbaijan**
- Negative result of the PCR test issued within 72 hours before arrival in Azerbaijan
- Negative result of the PCR test issued within 48 hours before departure from Azerbaijan



### **PCR Test:**

Regardless of number of guests in the group, we organize PCR test procedure at the hotel. The PCR test is taken by a professional medical center employee at the hotel's room or lobby. The result is ready in 4-5 hours in PDF and printed version.

### **Contacts:**



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