

Touch the soul of Azerbaijan

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«FOOD ON FOOT»

Gastronomic tour

Every country's culinary traditions have a lot to say about the culture, lifestyle and nature of its people. Traveling along the gastronomic routes and tasting the masterpieces of the national cuisine of Azerbaijan, gives a great opportunity to discover the country from another, "tasty" side!



Tour validity: **01.01.2022-01.06.2022**

Duration: **6 days / 5 nights**

Tour program:

Day #1

- Arrival in Baku
- Greeting guests at the airport, transfer and accommodation at the hotel
- Welcome lunch or dinner (depending on the arrival time)

After greeting at the Heydar Aliyev international airport, the guests will be accommodated at **hotel**. Taking their time at the hotel, the guests will later have a chance for the first impression of the traditional Azerbaijani cuisine. This first impression will bring one of the most picturesque city restaurants – **«Gala Bazaar»**.



«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.

Main course: Lamb kebab

One of the most ancient dishes of the East is lamb kebab. It is considered a traditional dish of the Eastern and Caucasian cuisine. During the frying process, the meat absorbs the amazing smell of wood, smoking, thereby acquiring an amazing aroma and taste. Marinated meat cooked on the wood or charcoal may rightfully be named a real kebab. The dish is served along with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers and herbs.

Day #2

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion to the Highland Park and Old City / Lunch at «Dolma» restaurant
- Excursion to Heydar Aliyev Center / Dinner at «Shirvanshah» restaurant

10:00 Visiting the **Highland Park** and **Old City**. The history of the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, goes back to the antiquity, although the precise date of its origin is still unknown. The territory of the Absheron Peninsula, where the city is located on, has a favorable geographical position: a calm bay, a warm dry climate, fertile soil and natural resources. Therefore, the emergence of the ancient settlements here was quite natural. The **Highland Park** is located on a hill in the Western part of the city. This is the best spot to overview the city itself, along with the Baku Bay and the Seaside Boulevard, which celebrated its 110th anniversary in 2019. Further, the guests will get acquainted with the **Old City**, which is called **«Icheri Sheher»**. Many historical and architectural

monuments are concentrated on its territory, including **the Palace of the Shirvanshahs**, the symbol of the city of Baku - **Maiden Tower**, Caravanserais, mosques, etc.



13:00 Lunch at «Dolma» restaurant

Main course: Dolma / Stuffed grape leaves

Dolma is a unique traditional dish that consists of grape leaves stuffed with boiled minced lamb meat and rice. The name of the dish, «dolma», is common to several Turkic languages and it has a meaning «to fill» or «to stuff».



14:00 Our tour goes on with a visit to the **Heydar Aliyev Center**. The Heydar Aliyev Center was built by world-famous architect Zaha Hadid. An internationally recognized architectural work, the building of the Heydar Aliyev Center has become a signature landmark of modern Baku due to its innovative and cutting-edge design. The Center achieved a famous **«Design of the Year Award» back in 2014**. Extending on eight floor levels, the center accommodates a 1000-seat auditorium, temporary exhibition spaces, a conference center, workshops, and a museum.



18:00 Return to the hotel

19:00 Dinner at «Shirvanshah» restaurant

Main course: Azerbaijani pilaf with chestnuts and meat

This kind of pilaf is slightly different from the ones made in Central Asia or Turkey. First comes the rice cooked in a special way, and then, the accompanying dishes as the additions to the main one. Onion chopped into half rings with the addition of turmeric is fried in ghee, over the low heat. Meanwhile, the meat is cooked separately in salted water. At the end of cooking, the meat is sprinkled with fried onions, dried cherry plums and fried chestnuts.



Day #3

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion to Fire Worshippers' Temple «Ateshgah» and burning hill «Yanardag»
- Culinary master class on cooking kebab and kutabs

10:00 On the territory of Azerbaijan, called «The Land of Fire», there is a **«burning mountain», «Yanardag»**. It is one of the most amazing natural attractions of the Absheron Peninsula. Yanardag is a flaming mountain slope that cannot be extinguished either by rain or covered with sand, which has been burning for several millennia. The fiery landscape can be explained very simply: natural gas is released from the upper layers of the soil. When it comes into contact with oxygen, it turns into a flame. Lots of legends are associated with this mountain slope, so the locals and the pilgrims from all over the world still consider Yanardag a sacred place of the worship.

Next on our tour is the **Temple of Fire Worshippers – «Ateshgah»**

Azerbaijan is one of a few places on Earth where even today you may find elements of the fire cult and the remains of the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. These places, where oil oozes from

the ground and natural gas bursts out into flaming torches, have always attracted fire worshipers from all over the world. Baku, its oil, «the burning land» have been known far beyond its borders since ancient times. The official religion in the reigns that arose in the 7th century BC, such as Manna and Media, was Zoroastrianism. The spread of this religion was related to the self-igniting sources of oil and gas.



13:00 Culinary master class and lunch

After visiting the sights of Absheron peninsula, the male part of the group will have a chance to **acquire unique skills in making kebabs** under the guidance of a professional chef who will teach the cooking basics in the best traditions of Azerbaijani cuisine.

For the ladies of the group there will be a **master class on cooking kutabs**, thin dough cakes with meat or vegetable filling.



Main course: Lula kebab

Lula kebab is a type of kebab made from minced lamb seasoned with spices. First, minced meat is placed in the fridge for 20-30 minutes. Then a lula in the form of sausage is formed from minced meat and strung on a skewer. Lula kebab is cooked on the grill over the hot coals and with no flame. When kebab is ready, it is wrapped in pita bread (lavash bread) and garnished with onions and herbs.

15:00 Return to the hotel and free time

Day #4

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Exploring the regions of Shamakhi and Sheki
- Visiting the winery in Shamakhi and the tasting of Azerbaijani wine
- Accommodation at the hotel in Sheki
- Dinner in Sheki restaurant

10:00 Departure to Shamakhi region

The first stop of the ride will be in **the city of Shamakhi**. Being the capital of the ancient state of the Shirvanshahs since the 9th century, Shamakhi was one of the main points on the Great Silk Road. The area of the region is famous for its picturesque nature, mountain forests and meadows. Shamakhi is located at an altitude of 800 meters above the sea level. The mild climate of the region makes it one of the main centers of winemaking in Azerbaijan. Guests will visit one of the best **wine-making companies, «Meysari»**. «The Shirvan Wines Company», known as «Meysari», is one of the newest wineries in Azerbaijan and the first company in the country to receive an EU organic certification. As part of the tasting, guests will have an opportunity to taste some local wines, such as Mahmari, Sadaf and Mardjan.



13:00 Lunch in Shamakhi

Main course: Saj with lamb meat

This is a very tasty and juicy dish cooked in a special way. The traditional recipe is about using «saj», an iron disk for baking bread, which gave a name to the dish itself. The vegetables used in the cooking process give the delicious juice which emphasizes the taste of the meat.

The main course will come with a bottle of Azerbaijani red semi-sweet wine «Madrasa», made according to the classic technology from the grape sort «madrasa» grown in the mountainous regions of Shamakhi and Ismayilli.



14:00 Going to Sheki and accommodation at the hotel

18:00 Dinner in Sheki

Main course: Piti

Piti is a Sheki's signature dish, a lamb soup with peas, vegetables, cherry plum and spices. This soup is cooked from the night. Each portion is prepared in a separate clay pot. Before serving, the dish is seasoned with spices and saffron, sprinkled with chopped dried mint.



Day #5

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion in Sheki
- Visiting Sheki Khans' Palace and Albanian Church
- Return to Baku and accommodation at the hotel

10:00 Departure for an excursion along **Sheki**. One of the most ancient cities of Azerbaijan, Sheki is located in the southern foothills of the Greater Caucasus and 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 with its magnificent frescoes and exquisite handmade window decorations. Next on tour is the traditional workshop visit. There will be an opportunity to get acquainted with the **manufacturing process of «Shebeke»**, the patterns of colored glass and wooden bars, assembled without any nails and glue. Then another traditional workshop, but this time a tasty one with a chance to see and **try the delicious «Sheki pakhlava»**.



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. Here, next to the territory of the church, you may find a memorial bust in honor of the famous explorer, installed as a sign of gratitude from the local people and the state.

14:00 Lunch in Sheki and return to Baku

19:00 Accommodation at the hotel and free time

Day #6

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Check-out from the hotel and visit to «Yashil Bazaar»
- 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»**. 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 1 night
- Breakfasts at the hotels
- 4 lunches and 3 dinners
- 1 bottle of wine for each guest complimentary (local wine brand)
- Culinary master class on cooking kebab and kutabs
- Excursion to Old City and Heydar Aliyev Center
- Excursion to Fire Worshippers' Temple «Ateshgah» and burning hill «Yanardag»
- Exploring the regions of Shamakhi and Sheki (visiting Sheki Khans' Palace and Albanian Church)
- Visiting a winery in Shamakhi and tasting of Azerbaijani wine
- 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:



Elman Mammadov

Sales & Marketing Specialist

Suleyman Vezirov, 22
Baku, Azerbaijan, AZ1005

Tel: (+99412) 437 90 90 ext: 238

Mob: (+99450) 295 11 53

Email: marketing@victorytour.az