



THE BEST OF GEORGIA AND ARMENIA



Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi

Arrive in Tbilisi. Meet your guide at the airport and have a transfer to the hotel. Check-in and time for rest.

Day 2: Tbilisi

In the morning start Tbilisi Sightseeing tour. Historic part of Tbilisi is located at the foot of Narikala Fortress. It charms visitors with its romantic, narrow streets, beautiful facades and picturesque sites next to each other, including Metekhi Church, Synagogue, Sioni Cathedral, Bridge of Peace, Anchiskhati Church and famous sulphur bathhouses. Take a cable car to Narikala fort. Modern part of Tbilisi is no less impressive, especially Rustaveli Avenue with its exquisite, 19th century architecture. Free time.

Overnight.



Day 3: Tbilisi – Mtskheta – Uplistsikhe – Gudauri

Drive to visit the ancient capital and religious center of Georgia – Mtskheta and its historical places: Jvari church (6th cen.) and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (11th cen.) where the Robe of Christ is buried (UNESCO World Heritage sites). Then drive to visit Uplistsikhe Cave Town near Gori. Uplistsikhe served, over the centuries, as a place for both, residential purposes and as a pagan rituals site. The functional aspects of the city are still clearly visible in its remains, including an ancient theatre, the hall of pagan rituals, wine-cellars etc. The Silk Road passed there, traces of which can still be seen. Continue up to the Military Highway leading to the Higher Caucasus Mountains. On the way visiting Ananuri fort. Dinner and overnight in a hotel in Gudauri ski resort.

Day 4: Gudauri – Stepantsminda – Tbilisi

Drive to Stepantsminda settlement famous for the beautiful Mt. Kazbek (5047m). According to an old Greek legend, Prometheus was chained to this mount as a punishment for stealing fire from Zeus. Drive up (with local 4 WD cars) on the forested slopes to Gergeti Trinity Church, dating from the 14th century. A wonderful vista opens from there, over the settlement Stepantsminda and its surrounding mountains. Drive to Tbilisi. On the way visit a wine-cellar and have a wine-tasting. Georgia is considered to be the homeland of wine. The history of wine-making goes back to 6000 millennium B.C. and counts already 8000 vintages. The ancient Georgian method of making wines in underground clay jars is unique one and is listed in UNESCO World Heritage.

Check in and night in a hotel in Tbilisi.

Day 5: Tbilisi – Sadachlo

Transfer to the Georgia-Armenia border Sadakhlo. Change the guide and bus. Drive to Armenia. Breakfast at the hotel in Tbilisi. Continue to Geo- Arm border on Sadachlo/ Bagratashen. End of services in Georgia. Guide and driver change. Direct drive to UNESCO highlight - Hagpat monastery 10-13 cent. Arrival to lake Sevan. Visit the monasteries on the peninsula. Last stop at Noraduz cemetery (always note that if time permits) where numerous Armenian medieval and modern cross stones “Khachkars” are laid. Drive to Yerevan. Check in at the hotel. Overnight in Yerevan.

Day 6: Yerevan city tour - Echmiadzin – Zvartnots - Ararat Brandy factory - Yerevan

Breakfast at the hotel. City tour in Yerevan with a stop over the Cascade monument which opens a nice panoramic view to the city. Another stop is made near Tsitsernakaberd Memorial and Genocide Museum dedicated to the victims of 1915 massacres. Drive to the religious center of Armenia – Echmiadzin town and visit the cathedral of 4th cen. near the residence of Catholicos. Armenia was the 1st country in the world to adopt Christianity as a State religion in 301 AD. Visit other UNESCO sights such as St. Hripsime church and the ruins of Zvartnots cathedral on the way back to Yerevan. Optional visit legendary Ararat brandy factory. Overnight in Yerevan.

Day 7: Yerevan - Khor Virap and Mt. Ararat - Wine region Areni - Noravank - Yerevan

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Khor Virap monastery which offers the closest view to the Biblical Mt. Ararat. In Khor Virap which means deep pit was imprisoned Armenian first Catholicos (the supreme Patriarch of Armenian Apostolic church). Continue to Vayots Dzor region and visit wine region Areni. Possible visit at one of the local wineries and proceed to the



beautiful Gnishik canyon and Noravank monastery. It's definitely one of the most beautiful medieval monasteries of Armenia surrounded by high red rocks over the canyon. Return back to Yerevan. Overnight in Yerevan.

Day 8: Yerevan - Garni - Geghard - Vernissage -Yerevan

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Garni village and visit Garni pagan temple of 1st cen. In the afternoon visit UNESCO highlight – Geghard cave monastery of 12-13 cen. Lunch in a local house in Garni tasting home made Armenian famous Khorovats (barbeque) and participating at Armenian traditional bread “lavash” baking process. Return back to Yerevan. If week end visit Vernissgae open air handcraft market. Overnight in Yerevan.

Day 9: Departure

Transfer to airport. Departure.

