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# Tour Notes

Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia - Caucasus Discovery

Tour Duration – 15 Days



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●● | History ●●●●● | Wildlife ●○○○○

## Tour Pace

Busy

## Tour Highlights

- ✓ A fast-paced tour exploring the best of the Caucasus region
- ✓ Marvel at the view of Mt Ararat from Khor Virap Monastery in Armenia
- ✓ Wander through the delightful streets of old Tbilisi
- ✓ Walk up to the Gergeti Trinity Church under the dramatic Caucasus peak of Mt Kazbegi
- ✓ Wine tasting and local hospitality in Kakheti
- ✓ Fascinating pagan and Christian architecture



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## Tour Map



## Tour Essentials

<b>Accommodation:</b>	Comfortable mid range hotels with private bathrooms
<b>Included Meals:</b>	Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
<b>Group Size:</b>	Maximum of 12
<b>Start Point:</b>	Baku – you can arrive any time on day 1
<b>End Point:</b>	Yerevan – you can depart any time on day 15
<b>Transport:</b>	Minibus or coach
<b>Countries Visited:</b>	Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia



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### **Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia - Caucasus Discovery**

*The Caucasus nations of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia are probably some of the least known nations of Europe – in fact most people are not even sure whether they are actually in Europe. Hidden away and often eclipsed by their monumental neighbours, these countries hide a wealth of diverse secrets. This trip encompasses the very best of the region and is designed for those that wish to see a range of highlights in a short space of time on a busy fast-paced tour. In Tbilisi marvel at the various cultures that have left their mark on this city, from Imperial Russia to Ottoman Turkey and beyond. We travel into the High Caucasus at Kazbegi and walk up to a dramatically situated ancient church. Learn about ancient wine production and taste in the charming region of Kakheti. Armenia is the world's oldest Christian nation with an astounding collection of ancient churches and monasteries which will captivate you. In contrast is the capital Yerevan, a lively and engaging city which embraces modernity yet manages to retain its traditions, and is packed full of some of the best Soviet style architecture to be found anywhere. This is a busy tour with lots of fabulous history, culture, and scenery to enjoy. Isn't it time you learned more about this intriguing region?*

### **Tour itinerary notes**

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

### **Tour Guide**

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. In Georgia and Armenia you will have a different local English speaking guide for each country.

## *Itinerary*

### **Day 1 – Baku (approx. driving time 30mins, 25km)**

Arrive in Baku and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore. Overnight Ibis Hotel or similar. No meals or guided activities.

### **Baku**

Baku is a city with a decidedly split personality. While uber-modern buildings continually spring up and there is talk of turning the city into 'another Dubai', much of Baku is still made up of Soviet style apartment blocks. Oil wealth at the turn of the 20th century led to a profusion of rather elegant European style architecture, giving it yet another façade. But without a doubt Baku's most enigmatic part is the historic centre, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Icheri Sheher with its ancient collection of mosques, palaces and caravanserais, some of which date back to the 11th century. Located on the Absheron Peninsula, Baku can be rather windy – one theory of the origin of its name states that it means 'wind-pounded place', and it has numerous parks and squares like many of the old Soviet cities. Its first heyday came at the beginning of the 20th century, when the city produced more than half of the world's petroleum – after falling into decline during Soviet times, Baku is once again on the up.

### **Day 2 – Baku - Absheron Peninsula (approx. driving time 1.30 hours, 50km)**

Explore Azerbaijan's capital, including the medieval fortress of Icheri Sheher, the Shirvanshahs' Palace and the 15th century caravanserai among other sites. From Baku we head to the Absheron Peninsula to visit the



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'flaming mountain' of Yanardag, continuously alight with burning underground gases that seep through holes in the earth's surface. Photo stop at the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center. We then visit the Gala Museum, the 'fire-worshippers' temple of Ateshgah, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and continue to the medieval fortress at Amirjan before returning to Baku for the night. Overnight Ibis Hotel or similar. (B)

### Yanardag

The burning hillside of Yanardag is one of Azerbaijan's most bizarre sites. From beneath the earth flammable gases seep through the porous sandstone, erupting into flames that can reach 10 metres in height, although this is rare these days as extraction has considerably reduced the amount of gas. The flames are never extinguished having been lit accidentally in 1958. Most of the world's 'flaming mountains' are situated in Azerbaijan and Marco Polo recorded similar sights nearby as he passed through the region.

### Day 3 – Gobustan (UNESCO) (approx. driving time 2.30 hours, 160km)

This morning we depart for Gobustan, a short distance from the city of Baku. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007, Gobustan is rich in archaeological monuments with over 6000 rock engravings dating back as far as 40,000 years. The petroglyphs depict ceremonial dances, battles, warriors, boats and many other scenes, as well as more recent Roman 'graffiti' from the 1st century. But Gobustan is equally well known for its natural phenomena – mud volcanoes that simmer and belch muddy bubbles from their cones, an incredibly atmospheric place and probably unlike anything you will have seen before. Azerbaijan is home to more than half of the mud volcanoes in the world with nearly 400 of them within its borders. Roughly every twenty years one of them explodes with great gusto, showering tons of mud over the surrounding area. Later this afternoon we return to Baku and enjoy the panoramic views from the upland park. You will then have some time at leisure to enjoy the city (B)

### Day 4 – Baku – Shamakhi – Sheki (approx. driving time 5.00 hours, 300km)

This morning we journey to the North of Azerbaijan to the important city of Sheki. En route stop at Shamakhi and visit the ancient Juma mosque and the mausoleum of Seven Domes. Continue to the delightful town of Sheki, one of Azerbaijan's highlights. An important centre on the Trans-Caucasian trade routes, it was an independent khanate up until the 1820s and evidence of its former grandeur is not hard to spot. The splendid Khan's Palace was built in 1762 without the use of any nails and is elaborately decorated with ornate patterns on its exterior. There are also several old caravanserais and mosques to explore. Sheki is a delight to wander around, with winding streets and traditional houses giving the feeling of yesteryear. Overnight Sheki Palace or similar (B)

### Day 5 – Sheki – Border with Georgia – Kakheti region – Tbilisi (approx. driving time 6.30 hours, 390km)

This morning we visit the ancient temple in the Kish village, one of the first churches in Caucasus. Then we cross the border into Georgia. Visit Kakheti, Georgia's picturesque wine district, which lies due east from Tbilisi in a land dotted with fine old churches and vineyard after vineyard. We explore the region this afternoon, including a stop at a local winery and get a feel for the methods of wine production in Georgia. Viticulture was arguably first practiced here some 8000 years ago and to this day is an intrinsic part of the national psyche. Also explore the beautiful building and grounds of Tsinandali Residence. Later we continue to the capital Tbilisi. Overnight Hotel Kalasi (B)

### Tbilisi

Surrounded by mountains on three sides, Georgia's capital feels neither European nor Asian but rather a fusion of both. Founded in the 4th century by King Vakhtang Gorgasali on the site of its warm mineral-water springs, it developed into the main city of the Caucasus. By the 12th century Tbilisi was one of the most important political, economic and cultural centres of the region. It stood as a key stop on the famous Silk Road - right on the border between Europe and Asia. The city has a vaguely southern feel to it, with a relaxed atmosphere and an easy charm. In the old town, known as the Maidan, wooden houses with a distinctly



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Balkan feel overlook the Mtkvari River, and in the city centre there are imposing neo-classical and Art Nouveau buildings mingling with the inevitable Soviet-era concrete blocks. Gorgasali Square, on the opposite bank of the river to the Metekhi Church, was once the site of the old bazaar, and is a good place to start a walk taking in the sights of the city. A road from the Armenian Church on the south Middle Eastern influence, and there are plenty side of the square leads to the Narikala Citadel, built in 360 AD by the Persians, and ruined by an earthquake in the 19th century. You can walk along the battlements of the citadel which offer good views across the city. Tbilisi has a good range of restaurants and cafes strung out along both the left and right banks of the river where you can sample some of the local delicacies and watch the life of the city pass you by.

#### **Day 6 – Tbilisi sightseeing (approx. driving time 1 hour, 50km)**

Spend the day exploring delightful Tbilisi, taking in the fascinating history of this long-overlooked region. We spend the day discovering sites such as the National Museum, home to many of the treasures that inspired the legend of the Golden Fleece, as well as the Narikala citadel, Metekhi Temple and the Sioni Cathedral, among other sites. A walk across the modern Bridge of Hope (pedestrian only) gives a great perspective of the mix of old and new and fine views. Tonight, enjoy traditional Georgian food at a local restaurant. Overnight Hotel Kalasi (B)

#### **Day 7 – Tbilisi – Mtskheta (UNESCO) – Gori – Uplistsikhe – Borjomi (approx. driving time 4 hours, 220km)**

This morning we take the short drive to Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia. Mtskheta is packed full of historical monuments and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explore the 11th century Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and the 6th century Jvari Monastery, with superb vistas for miles around. Continue to Gori (journey around 3 hours) a town almost entirely known as the birthplace of Joseph Stalin. Visit the museum where you can explore Stalin's personal train carriage and see the small house where he spent his early years. Gori train station is also worth a stop for its imposing waiting room. Then we drive a short distance to Uplistsikhe, a cave town dated to 7th Century BC. Finally continue for our overnight stay in the Lesser Caucasus in the spa town of Borjomi (B)

#### **Gori**

A few kilometres off the main Tbilisi to Kutaisi highway, Gori is an undistinguished place with one main claim to notoriety; Stalin was born here, and the town has done its best to cash in on Georgia's most infamous son. The museum itself is enormous, and presents an interestingly skewed version of 20th century events. Stalin himself, we learn, was something of a prodigy, a talented poet, former editor of Pravda (a publication not known, admittedly, for its journalistic merits), and an all-round decent chap. Gori itself, like most of Georgia, glosses over any inconvenient facts about him, ignoring any genocidal qualities he may have had, and preferring to recall him as a strong leader.

#### **DAY 8: Borjomi –Vardzia - Akhaltsikhe – Borjomi (approx. driving time 4.30 hours, 230km)**

Drive along river Kura Valley to the cave town **Vardzia** (12th c). On the way stop at **Khertvisi fortress**, built in the Middle Ages. **Vardzia**, the unique example of Georgian Renaissance is the place associated with Queen Tamara and Shota Rustaveli, the author of the legendary poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin". Visit Vardzia (walking). Time permitting stop in Akhaltsikhe town and visit Castle. Return to our hotel in Borjomi. Hotel (B)

#### **Day 9 – Borjomi – Ananuri Fortress – Kazbegi – (High Caucasus) (approx. driving time 3 hours, 175km)**

Continue our tour onto the Georgian Military Highway and snake our way up into the Caucasus Mountains. Visit the castle complex of Ananuri attractively situated on the Aragvi River. Continue climbing until the Jvari Pass where will stop and drink in the views of the High Caucasus range. This dramatic journey continues with a descent into the frontier town of Kazbegi, surrounded by dramatic peaks. Overnight local hotel in town (B)



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### **Ananauri**

The Georgian Military Highway has existed as a route since ancient times, but until the 19th century it was little more than a track. The Russians made it into a major road as an aid to suppressing rebellious tribes in the Caucasus, and the highway bores through mountains in a sequence of tunnels and climbs over passes frequently blocked by snow in winter. A viaduct leads to the churches of Ananauri, the larger of which was built in 1689, with elaborate carvings decorating the exterior. Overlooking the church is a 12th century watchtower.

### **Kazbegi**

The most sizeable town in Khevi province, Kazbegi is nevertheless a small place with just over 4,000 inhabitants. There are a few shops and market stalls which mainly seem to sell knitwear, and one solitary restaurant. The real draw in Kazbegi is the Holy Trinity Church, sitting high on a ridge overshadowed by the looming bulk of Mt Kazbek, third-highest in Georgia with a summit reaching 5,047m. A cable car was constructed in 1988 but did not have the support of the local population, who saw it as an assault on the sanctity of the church, and it has since fallen into disrepair. The church itself is surprisingly large given the location - it sits 2,170m above sea level - and the main body of it was constructed in the 14th century, the tower added in later years.

### **Day 10 – Gergeti Church – Tbilisi (approx. driving time 3 hours, 175km)**

This morning if conditions are favourable, you will have the opportunity to take the walk up to the Sameba Church (subject to weather conditions) with its stunning setting below the brooding presence of Mt Kazbek, a dramatic 5000m plus peak. For those that do not want to walk, it is possible to hire jeeps for an extra charge to go by up via a track. Note we may do this visit the previous late afternoon depending on weather forecasts. Later we leave the High Caucasus and return to Tbilisi in preparation for our journey into Armenia tomorrow. Overnight Hotel Kalasi or similar (B)

### **Day 11: Tbilisi – Armenia border – Haghpat – Dilijan – Sevan – Yerevan (approx. driving time 6.00 hours, 330km)**

An early start this morning for a 1.5 hours journey approx. to the border. After completing border formalities and meeting your Armenian guide, we drive to Haghpat monastery, a journey of around 2 hours from the border through beautiful scenery. Haghpat, (10th century UNESCO Heritage site) which used to be a spiritual, cultural, and educational centre of the region. The monastery is one of the masterpieces of Armenian medieval architecture. Continue to the Dilijan region, known as the little Switzerland of Armenia. We have a short stop to have a look around the old part of the town. We then travel on to the picturesque Lake Sevan and the Sevanavank monastery which is a 9th century monastery founded on the peninsula that used to be an island. The monastery affords a panoramic view of the alpine lake. Finally, today, we continue to Yerevan, your base for the final stage of this Caucasus adventure. Overnight Imperial Palace or similar (B)

### **Day 12: Geghard Monastery – Garni Pagan Temple - Yerevan Sightseeing (approx. driving time 3.00 hours, 95km)**

This morning we drive around 1 hour to Kotayk province to explore Geghard Monastery and Garni Pagan temple. Admire the outstanding views of the Armenian Highlands stretched out before you. From Garni, enjoy breathtaking views down into the canyon and to the strategically located Geghard Monastery below. Garni dates to the 1st century AD and is the only pagan temple that remained after the adoption of Christianity. After exploring these magnificent sites, we return to Yerevan and enjoy a city tour of Yerevan including visits to a high-scale view point over the city, City Park, Abovyan Street, and Republic Square. Then we visit the interesting cascade area. We also have short visit of Matenadaran – a Museum and Scientific Institute of ancient manuscripts, hosting the treasures of Armenian science and around 20,000 ancient manuscripts – the largest collection in the world. The short tour in Matenadaran will be exclusively guided by the most prominent specialists of the Institute. Overnight Imperial Palace Hotel or similar (B)



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### Geghard

Geghard means 'spear', and this church set in a narrow gorge is reputed to have once contained the spear which pierced the side of Christ on the cross; the spear now lies in the treasury at Echmiadzin. Built up against a cliff face, the main cathedral was constructed in 1215, but the first monastery on the site is thought to date from the 4th century AD. The monastery is decorated with reliefs depicting animals, crosses and geometrical shapes.

### Yerevan

Set on the edge of a ravine above the River Hrazdan, Yerevan is a mixture of architectural styles, with some imposing Soviet-era buildings as well as residential homes where different types of stone are used. Concentric boulevards spill outwards from the city centre interspersed with parkland, and this sense of space and greenery gives Yerevan an almost rural feel at times. The main street of bars, restaurants and shops is Abovian, running north from Republic Square. The cathedral of St Gregory the Illuminator was built with money from the enormous Armenian diaspora to celebrate 1,700 years of Christianity in Armenia. The covered market stands opposite the Blue Mosque, which has been recently restored. A range of museums cover everything from art to natural history – one of the most impressive is the Matenadaran, devoted to ancient manuscripts.

### Day 13: Yerevan - Khor Virap Monastery – Noravank Monastery - Yerevan (approx. driving time 4.30 – 5.00 hours, 250km)

An early start today at around 08:00am travelling south to the spectacular Khor Virap Monastery which affords excellent views to the stunning sight of Mt Ararat. This monastery has long been an important place of pilgrimage for Armenians. After the tour of the monastery, we will be back in Yerevan by approximately 2pm and you will have the rest of the afternoon at leisure in Yerevan. Overnight Imperial Palace or similar (B)

### Khor Virap

Standing on a hill in the middle of Ararat Plain, Khor Virap, which translates as 'deep dungeon', is a monastery with great historical significance as it was the place where St Gregory the Illuminator, patron saint of Armenia, was imprisoned by King Trdat III in the 3rd century. Most of the monastery dates from 1661, but in St George's chapel you can still see the cell where the unfortunate monk was held - a pit 6m deep which can be reached by ladder.

### Day 14: Zvartnots – Echmiadzin – Genocide Museum (approx. driving time 1.30 – 2.00 hours, 50km)

Visit the ruins of Zvartnots temple, a three-tiered central-domed structure of astounding magnificence. According to European specialists, the temple of Zvartnots should be ranked among the greatest monuments of ancient architecture. Continue to Echmiadzin, the spiritual centre of Armenia, the Armenian Vatican. Echmiadzin Mother Cathedral is considered the oldest cathedral in the world. It was built between 301 and 303 by Armenia's patron saint Gregory the Illuminator, following the adoption of Christianity as a state religion. Echmiadzin translates as "the place where the Only Begotten Son of God descended." Next follows an optional and sobering visit to the Genocide Memorial and Museum, dedicated to the victims of the Great Genocide that took place in 1915. For those that do wish to visit the Genocide Museum and Memorial, your time will be at leisure. Overnight Imperial Palace or similar (B)

### Echmiadzin

The spiritual centre of the Armenian Church, Echmiadzin was the setting for a series of visions by St Gregory the Illuminator, where columns of fire turned into churches. The first monastery was built, like many others in Armenia, on the site of a pagan temple in the 4th century, rebuilt in the 5th century in a different style and then renovated in the 17th century. The cathedral treasury is a museum of religious relics, and is where the spear from Geghard that is said to have pierced Christ as he hung on the cross is stored. The treasury also contains a piece of wood said to be from Noah's Ark, which came to rest on the summit of Mt Ararat, today situated in Turkey but long part of Armenia.



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### Day 15 – Depart Yerevan

Any remaining time is at leisure, until airport transfer for your onward flight (B)

## Tour inclusions/Exclusions

#### Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers  
All accommodation  
Transportation throughout  
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

#### Excluded:

International flights  
Travel Insurance  
Visas if applicable  
Drinks  
Items of a personal nature  
Tips (Discretionary)

## Important Information

#### Foreign Travel Advice Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At this time there are no warnings in place for areas we travel to on our small group tour to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

#### Accommodation and Meals

##### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included.

If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.





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### Accommodation Rating

On our Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia tour you can expect private bathrooms throughout the trip. Most hotels will have a restaurant and bar but a bar is not usually available in the family run guesthouses.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

### Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that on occasion lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

#### Azerbaijan

Lunch £5.00

Dinner £10.00

#### Armenia

Lunch £10 - £15

Dinner £15 - £20

#### Georgia

Lunch £10 - £15

Dinner £15 - £20

### Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

#### Azerbaijan

Beer £1.80

Water £0.75

#### Armenia

Bottle of Beer £2 - £3

Bottle of Water £0.5 - £1



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## Georgia

Bottle of Beer £1 - £2

Bottle of Water £0.30 - £0.50

## Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is commonly recognised as a way of rewarding guides and drivers for good service. A reasonable amount to bring for tips would be around \$50-60, split between the guides and drivers, if you are travelling on a group tour. For private tours, you should allow more.

Waiters and bar staff in the region are generally low paid and it is common practice to leave a small tip – around 10% of the bill.

## Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** Baku, Yerevan and Tbilisi are larger towns are well equipped with ATMs for obtaining money

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Cards are widely accepted in the main cities in larger restaurants and hotels

**Local Currency:** Azerbaijan – Manet  
Georgia – Lari (GEL)  
Armenia – Dram (AMD)

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US Dollar

**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you.

## Joining your Tour

### Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

### Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require a visa for a tourist visit to Azerbaijan. For further details please visit the applicable website shown below.

British Nationals - [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)





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US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - [www.smartraveller.gov.au/](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/)

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destination's nearest embassy or consulate.

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals do not require a visa for a short-term tourist visit to Georgia and Armenia.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance.

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages for each country, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

There are no compulsory vaccinations required for travel to Azerbaijan, Georgia or Armenia. However, we recommend that you speak with your doctor for the most up to date advice regarding any vaccinations that may be recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

### Travelling with medicines in Georgia

You should carry a doctor's prescription if you intend to travel with prescription medicine and declare the items on your Customs Declaration Form. Possession of these items, even with a doctor's prescription could, if not declared, or if the quantity held exceeds legal limits, lead to administrative or even criminal proceedings. Check legal quantities of medicines before you travel with the [Georgian Embassy London](#).



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# Preparing for your tour

## Climate

Generally speaking, the best time to visit Azerbaijan is between May to October. It can get very hot in the summer but the winter is often bitterly cold inland with very strong winds, especially in Baku. The best time to visit the Caucasus region is between May to October. It can get very hot in the middle of summer at lower altitudes in places like Tbilisi and Yerevan. Temperatures in the mountainous regions of Svaneti and Kazbegi are somewhat cooler and at night it can be quite cold. Rain showers can be expected at any time of year. Spring is a lovely time for wildflowers. September and October tend to be the busiest time for tourists but also is generally the driest time of the year with pleasant temperatures.

Note that in the High Caucasus region of Tusheti weather conditions can be very unpredictable and even in early autumn the passes can be impacted by snowfall. Therefore, the Tusheti extension is done pre-tour for the last tour of the season.

## Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy. Please note that it can get quite cool in the mountains in the evening and first thing in the morning.

## Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. It is usually advisable to bring a torch/head torch in case of any electricity outages. You may wish to take walking poles if you are used to using them.

## Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended. When we are travelling between places sandals or other comfortable footwear is fine.

## Journey times

All journey times are approximate and these may be impacted by unforeseen incidents such as mechanical problems, roadworks, poor weather etc.

## Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

## Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V/50 Hz and plugs have two round pins.

## Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared 21 June 2023.