

## Georgia - Eastern Turkey

**Day 1:** Depart for Tbilisi

**Day 2:** Tbilisi

Arrive in Tbilisi, meet in the airport and transfer to a hotel.

In the morning Tbilisi city tour: founded on a mixed eastern and western cultures Tbilisi will undoubtedly enchant any visitor. Narrow streets of Old Tbilisi will be here your companion to the picturesque districts, early Christian churches and the bath district where the city history starts. And panoramic view from Narikhala fortress overlooking all the districts of the city will simply increase your admiration. We will also visit Georgian national art museum and its gold fund with the unique artifacts of Georgian chased art and some rare enamel samples on display.

Overnight in Tbilisi

**Day 3:** Tbilisi - Signaghi - Telavi

In the morning drive to Kakheti famous for being cradle of wine-making. Visit the fortified town of Signaghi lying on the slopes of the mountains. Taking a stroll in the streets of the town, visit Ethnographic museum and enjoy the views of the Caucasus Mountains and Alazani valley. Continue the way to Telavi and visit one of the local villager's wine caller and taste wine produced in a Georgian traditional way. Overnight in Telavi.

**Day 4:** Telavi - Mtskheta - Gudauri

In the morning we will visit Alaverdi cathedral (11th century) and then drive to the ancient capital of Georgia - Mtskheta. Here we will visit Jvari monastery (6th century) and Svetitskhoveli cathedral which houses the robe of Christ (11th century). They are both UNESCO World heritage sights. Afterwards we continue our way along Aragvi gorge to the north to Gudauri ski resort. On the way visit Ananuri complex (17th century) overlooking Jinvali water reservoir. Next 2 overnights in Gudauri.

**Day 5:** Gudauri - Kazbegi - Gudauri

Today the highlight of this trip awaits you. On the way to Kazbegi we will enjoy fabulous views of the Great Caucasus, turbulent rivers and fascinating gorges. On arrival in Kazbegi we start walking up to Gergeti Trinity church (14th century). The route to the church starts in the village and continuous in the forest. Here we enjoy the beautiful view of Mt. Kazbegi (5047m). Return back to Gudauri.

**Day 6:** Gudauri - Gori - Kutaisi

In the morning we drive to Gori - the birthplace of Stalin and to Uplistsikhe cave town (1st millennium BC) which preserves various interesting religious and household buildings from pagan and early Christian period. Afterwards continue our way to west to visit the city of Kutaisi. The legendary story of the Golden Fleece is connected with Kutaisi. In Kutaisi we will visit Gelati monastery (12th century) which had been the cultural and educational centre of Georgia over many centuries. Overnight in Kutaisi.

**Day 7:** Kutaisi - Batumi - Artvin

In the morning we will visit Bagrati cathedral (11th century) which represents the unity of Georgia and is UNESCO world heritage site. Afterwards we continue our way to the Black sea coast city Batumi which attracts all visitors with its exquisite European style architecture and subtropical plants. Then the way through tea and citrus plantation will bring you to the Botanical Gardens comprising 5000 species of Georgian and foreign plants. Visit Gonio fortress (1st

century) - once one of the greatest fortifications at the Georgian border. After crossing Sarpi border continue the way along the coast line to the town of Artvin. Overnight in Artvin.

**Day 8:** Artvin - Erzurum

Today we will depart for the largest city of eastern Turkey - Erzurum. The territory between Artvin and Erzurum is full of Georgian historical complexes. Visit the church of Oshki (10th century) famous for its stunning stone carvings and Ishkhani church (11th century). Overnight in Erzurum.

**Day 9:** Erzurum - Ani - Kars

In the morning after short excursion in Erzurum we head for Kars and visit the ancient Armenian capital - Ani. Abandoned Armenian churches and old settlements inside of the city-wall will tell us about the ancient city and its life in 11th-13th centuries. Overnight in Kars.

**Day 10:** Kars - Dogubeyezit

In the morning after visiting Kars fortress we depart for south to visit the town of Dogubeyezit and enjoy the enchanting view of Mt. Ararat (5137m). Here we will visit Ishak Pasha's palace located on a hilltop at 2200 dating back to the 17th-18th centuries. Overnight in Dogubeyezit.

**Day 11:** Dogubeyezit - Van

Today the way along clinker field will bring us to the city of Van and here you will admire the superb views on the lake Van. Visit Tuspa fortress - Urartian capital dating back to the 9th century BC. Afterwards continue the way to visit the carpet workshop. Then we will sail to the island of Akdamar by boat and visit its 10th century Armenian church of Holy Cross decorated with magnificent relieves. Overnight in Van.

**Day 12:** Departure