

GEORGIA

*The Caucasus
is a traveller's dream,
full of excitement,
meetings,
adventures and
hopefully,
life-long impressions.
Pristine nature,
mountains that
enthral climbers,
unique architecture
make it one of the
world's most beautiful
areas to explore.
Finally, it is a place
which abounds in
sunshine, fresh air
and clean water.*

Georgia is a small area of land to the south of the Great Caucasus Range, occupying the isthmus between the Black and Caspian Seas. Georgia is bordered to the north by Russia, to the east by Azerbaijan and to the south by Turkey and Armenia.

Due to its relatively small size, (it occupies an area of only 69,700 sq/km) you can cross Georgia by car in a single day, meeting along the way steppes, semi deserts, subtropical forests and glaciers which are overlooked by peaks up to 5,000m high. The Great Caucasus Range serves as Georgia's natural border with Russia. Its highest peaks are Mt.Shkhara 5,068m, Mt.Kazbek 5,047m.

Today, 3.8 million Georgians, living in a country of 5.5 million people, call themselves Kartveli and their country Sakartvelo, i.e. the Georgians' place. The latter name has not been in use since the 11th century when ethnically and linguistically related kingdoms in the region united to form one nation.

Orthodox Christianity, the state religion since the fourth century, has played a major part in Georgian history and culture.

In geographic terms Georgia belongs to neither Europe nor Asia; in cultural terms it is neither East nor West. It has a distinct language and distinct customs and traditions, found nowhere else in the world.

"Situated in a strategically valued location between East and West, Georgia was frequently invaded by foreign armies, its lands devastated, and its people subjugated to foreign rule and quarreling native fiefdoms. Together with local unrests, epidemics, and droughts, the invasions disrupted the social system, depleted the population, and inflicted upon the Georgians not just foreign rule but a foreign culture. Yet, even as Georgians adopted features of other cultures, they maintained their own. Their ethnic community was like a balloon: squeezed in one place, it popped out at another, always outliving its enemies".

The Georgian language belongs to the south Caucasian language group which has very little, if anything, in common with other families of languages. The prototype of contemporary Georgian spawned a number of related languages, such as the language of the mountainous province of Svaneti - Svanuri, the language of Samegrelo - Megruli, and some others, which together with the most widespread of them, contemporary Georgian, make up the Caucasian family of languages. Foreigners say the Georgian language is extremely difficult. As for the script, here is an example gaumarjos -[gaumarjos], meaning 'cheers', the word most often used in Georgia.

*Georgia - country of Mediter-
ranean culture, climate and
legacy, locate on the Black
Sea Coastline.*



Mtskheta - The Ancient Capital



At the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers, one of the oldest towns and the cultural and religious center of Georgia, Mtskheta, has been populated since the second millennium BC. From the third century BC until the fifth century AD, it was the capital of the eastern Georgian kingdom of Iberia. It is thought that the name “Mtskheta” comes from the name for the “father of all Georgians, the son of Kartlos, Mtskhetos.” The oldest monument of Mtskheta, the “Bridge of Pompeus” (65 BC) built by Romans to conquer the country, can still be seen soaring out of waters of the river Mtkvari only when the water level is low.

Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (11th century),

“Life-Giving Pillar” (in translation), is the main church of Mtskheta and the essence of the pride and admiration Georgians feel for their 1,500 year-old Christian history. It is a sacred place where fragments of the robe of Christ are kept. An enormous cedar tree grew from the place where legend claims Christ’s were buried. An enormous cedar tree grew from this place and it was that place chosen as a foundation to build the church; the magic tree used to make construction pillars. Being one of the best examples of Georgian renaissance church architecture, Svetitskhoveli served as the location for the coronation and burial of Georgian kings.



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral of 11th cc

Mtskheta is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is a living museum, with many architectural and historical monuments. All programmes in this catalogue provide opportunities for sightseeing in Mtskheta



Situated on the top of the hill overlooking the old capital, **Jvari Church (6th-7th c)** is a unique example of early Christian architecture. It was built on the site where one of the first Christian crosses in Georgia was erected.



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c) Shio was one of the 13 Syrian fathers frontioch who established monasteries and strengthened Christianity in Georgia. Near the 6th c. church there was a dark cave where he lived and where he is buried. In the 11th century a church was built over Shio's tomb. Another church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary was erected by king David the Builder. The refectory was built in the 12th century. At the end of the 12th century a complicated water supply system was built. Crossing 7 km of rocky hills spring water finally arrived in monastery complex.

Capital City - Tbilisi

A blend of cultures, a smell of spices, different ethnic groups meeting on street corners, different faiths sharing the same courtyards..... this is Tbilisi, the city that has been dominated by traders, warriors, tyrants and dictators in turn. Take a walk around the Old Town and breathe in the living past. Visit its bustling markets, the ancient sulphur bathes, treasury, and its magnificent churches, and gain a feel for the crossroads of the Caucasus. Tbilisi - a town which conquers you with increasing fascination and lodges in your heart forever.

There is a legend as to how the city was founded: In Mtskheta, King Vakhtang let his hawk loose one day and it chased after a pheasant. The King waited. He could not see the hawk, nor the pheasant. He followed the path that the hawk had taken down the valley. At the bottom of the valley flowed steaming waters, the colour of sulphur. The pheasant had drowned and the hawk sat above. Enchanted with the source of the hot waters, the King founded the city in the valley called Tbilisi which means warm in Georgian.



Metekhi church (XII c) and wooden balconies overlooking Mtkvari river.

The Old Town, called Kala, developed within the walls of a citadel and reached the banks of the Mtkvari river. At present it represents a wonderful mixture of winding streets, endless snaking alleyways, narrow lanes, passages, steps, arriving at unexpected squares and courtyards.

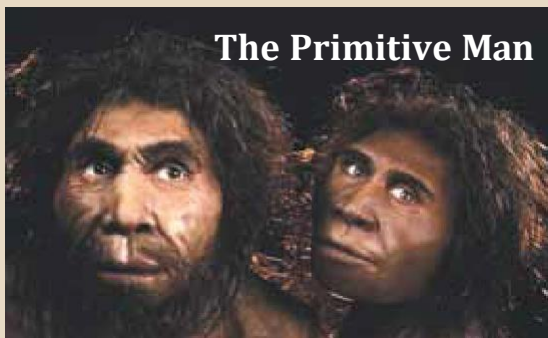
In 19th century, life in Tbilisi or "Tifel" flourished. The Old Town was rebuilt and the city began to expand around it. Elegant three-and-four-storey mansions were built. First a theatre and opera house were opened to the public, where one could feel the influence of Russia, France, Britain, Germany and Italy. Foreign languages were spoken and European literature was admired. The arts advanced and were highly appreciated; a new generation of Georgian writers and thinkers emerged. Tolstoy, Lermontov, Dumas, Pushkin and others were the frequent visitors of Tbilisi's theatre, opera, sulphur bathes, artists' salons and other gatherings of Georgian society.



All tours shown in this catalogue begin and end in Tbilisi, where the main international airport is located. All programmes include opportunities for sightseeing, shopping and cultural activities. In Tbilisi you can visit: Janashia State Museum and its treasury of pre Christian period, Open Air Museum of Ethnography, Georgian State Museum of Arts, Tbilisi Museum of History, Silk Museum, art galleries, oriental bazaar, etc.



Monument to King Vakhtang Gorgasali



The Primitive Man

at Europe's Threshold

Dmanisi, the site of a medieval town located at the confluence of two rivers has been registered as archaeological site in 1960 since excavations began there in 1936. The site is of major importance for research into the origin of man, his evolution and settlement. In 1991, Archaeologists unexpectedly came across the remains of an ancient man; in 1999 two hominoid skulls were discovered. The research confirmed that the Dmanisi remains are the oldest and the most primitive in Eurasia. On the basis of archaeological and paleontological discoveries and the hominoid materials, scholars dated Dmanisi site to 1,7 -1.8 million years ago.

The Myth of Argonauts

33 centuries ago the Argonauts started their mythical Journey to capture The Golden Fleece; Jason's story predated Homer's Odyssey and describes events which have taken place in Golden Age.

"Here in Georgia the sacred place of the bull cult protected by its snakes, in the land where the ram was held sacred and the fleece was used to gather gold, was further striking evidence for the truth of the tale. For me that moment on the muddy temple mound near Kobuleti was the end of the search, as it must have been for Jason, close on thirty-three centuries earlier."

Tim Severin

How does the legend of the Argonauts end? King Aeetes seemed invincible... But Medea, the charming princess famous for her healing powers, fell in love with Jason. It was only with her help that the Argonauts managed to overcome their challenges and seize the treasure of Colchis.



Medea cast a spell on Snake and put it to sleep, Jason takes the Golden Fleece

Modern Cloisonné Enamel Art



The tradition of cloisonné enamelwork has deep roots in Georgia. The collection of medieval cloisonné enamels, kept in local museums represents high artistic standards of this particular art. Today

cloisonné enamelwork has a renewed development in Georgian contemporary art. This technique has unlimited possibilities, not only in terms of following old traditions but also in contributing to modern Art and hence, helping to create a more beautiful, human, emotional and artistic world.

Niko Pirosmani

"far beyond Georgia, by virtue of his genius and humanity, belongs to world art".

Among the most remarkable, self-taught painters who had no professional training, using simple techniques and depicting the world on a canvas, seen by their unsophisticated eyes, is a Georgian painter Niko Pirosmashvili.

In Pirosmani's paintings ancient traditions, sense of humour, great affection for his characters and the nature blend in living reality of pre-revolution Georgia and impress viewer with their depth, power and sincerity.



"Actress Margarita", a French dancer who came to Georgia in 1905, became an inspiration for many romantic legends and poems. Niko Pirosmani was so charmed by her beauty that he gave her, literally, a sea of flowers and the painting was born.



Theatres

Tbilisi boasts a very interesting theatrical scene. Theatrical life is always in the centre of attention of the society; among Tbilisi theatres there are: Opera and Ballet Theatre, Rustaveli National Theatre, Marjanishvili State Academic Theatre, Griboedov Theatre, the Basement Theatre, Royal district Theatre, Theatre of Film Actors, Freedom Theatre and others, as well as, Reso Gabriadze's Puppet Theatre and its satirical adult puppetry production.



Georgian Polyphonic Singing

Its textures and vocal timbres sound mystically. Much of the music defies the conventions of harmony, counterpoint, and voice-leading Georgian singing is a polyphonic tradition, which means that the voices sing in multi-part, usually unaccompanied. The songs contain three, or even four, independent melodic lines. Each line functions with great melodic and harmonic independence. For



its uniqueness, Georgian polyphonic songs were recommended for declaration as "Intangible World Heritage" by UNESCO.

Architecture

A great numbers of architectural monuments, churches, fortresses, communal buildings, ruins of palaces give an evidence of a rich historical past and cultural heritage of the Georgian people.

Two major forms of ecclesiastic building developed in Georgia: basilica and the central domed structure which evolved into many complex variations, such as "free cross" church and the Tetraconch Church, perhaps the best example of the artistic triumph. Folk architecture in various regions and cities of Georgia could be specifically interesting for majority of visitors.

In city architecture, European style and local traditions are united in harmony. Buildings of pseudo -Gothic, -Mauritanian, -Baroque, -Rococo architectural styles are scattered throughout Tbilisi, Batumi and Kutaisi.



...a place, where east and west converge

Georgia's position at the crossroads of the eastern and western worlds puts her in contact with the countries of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean, the Hellenist and Roman empires, Iran, Turkey, Russia and Europe. Georgian art culture appeared to be a unique expression of the many worlds around it. The colour and richness typical for Georgian art are expressed in soaring architectural monuments and splendid wall paintings that inspired poetry, polyphonic songs and elegant dancing. Characteristic features of Georgian architecture are laconism and simplicity of forms, efficient design, harmonious proportions, grandeur combined with perfection, delicate ornamentation, light hues of colour, and a perfect harmony with the surrounding landscapes. Georgian murals are particularly interesting. The Georgian style of painting, based on Byzantine traditions, grew as an original individual school which reached its peak in the 10th-13th centuries. Georgian Folkdances and polyphony singing betrays its origin in far past. This hundred years old tradition is still a way to express Georgian spirit and is admired by all generations.

The Soul of Georgia

This program gives a flavor of the country

Cultural tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

The Path of Holy Syrian Fathers

Visit the most important religious and historic monuments of Georgia

Cultural tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

The Land of the Golden Fleece

You will explore the land where the myth of Argonauts was acted out

Cultural tour with 1 day hiking (12 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Explore the Secrets of the Ancient Land

Reveal the secrets of the ancient country and learn more about new archaeological discoveries

Archaeological tour (12 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

The Hidden Corners of Georgia

In search of ethnographical diversity

Ethnological tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

The Kingdom of Towers

The land of century old dwelling and watch towers, fortified villages and fortresses

Cultural tour with 1 day hiking (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Caucasus Mountain Life

A trip to Georgia's most intact province – Tusheti (Tusheti National Park)

Cultural tour with 3 days hiking (8 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Georgia in Objective

Traverse Georgia in search of the best shot

Photographical tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Life in Colors and Ornaments

Meet local craftsmen, visit artist studios and attend on workshops

Craft and Art tour (8 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

In Love and Sorrow with Sounds of Music

Enjoy magnificence and beauty of melodies of different regions

Musical tour (10 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Georgian City Life – Day & Night

We invite you to feel the rhythm of life in Georgia today

Culture and Entertainment (9 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Seasons: Low Good Best

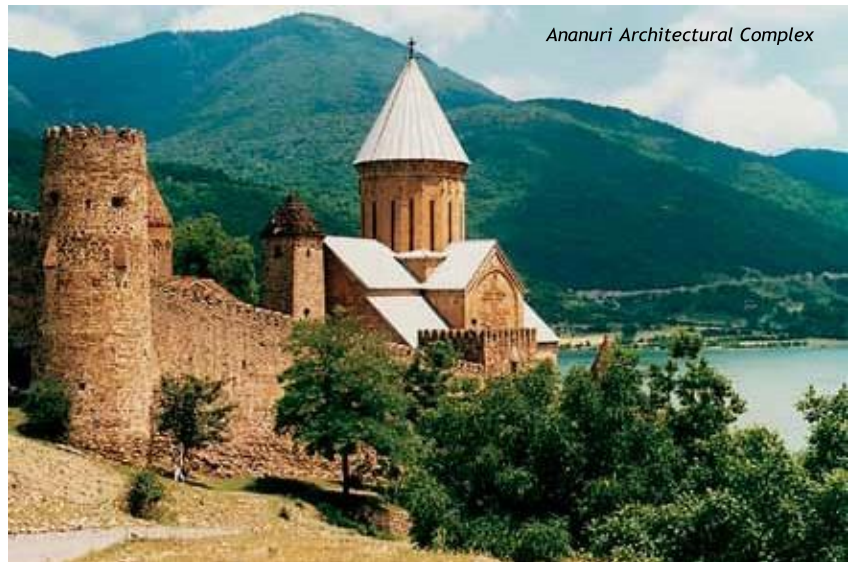
Detailed information on the programmes and our additional Travel Manual are available upon request



This programme has been designed to give the visitor as complete a picture of the culture, history, ecology and traditions of Georgia as possible. Over two weeks you will traverse Georgia from the snowy, severe and inaccessible summits of the Caucasus to the subtropical Black Sea coast; from the barren highlands to the rich and fertile agricultural lowlands and from deserts to lush forests and coniferous woods. You will sample some of the many traditional Georgian dishes and famous Georgian wines. As you follow this programme you will visit almost every geographical and historical province of Georgia; Kartli, Kakheti, Imereti, Guria, Ajara, Meskheta, Mtiuleti and Khevi. You will have a chance to meet the local people who speak different dialects, observe different traditions, lead different lives, but who in spite of some differences are united by one main characteristic: hospitality.

Colorful “Tiba-Tve” month of mowing grass and picturesque hayricks

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing tour;** ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi - Telavi;** ◆ **Day 4: Telavi - Tbilisi** We will travel to Kakheti, which is well-known for its hard-working, good-tempered people, and most famously, its wines. Kakheti is located on the eastern frontier of Georgia, and has strong eastern influences. **Places to visit:** David Gareja monastery complex. (6th century), Batonistsikhe (18th century), Alaverdi Cathedral (11th century), Ikalto Academy (12th century), Shuamta Monastery complex (6-17th centuries), Gremi architectural Complex (16-17th centuries), Chavchavadze residence in Tsinandali;
◆ **Day 5: Tbilisi - Gudauri;** ◆ **Day 6: Gudauri - Kazbegi - Gudauri** In order to see the high peaks, roaring rivers and mountain lifestyle of Georgia’s northern borderlands we will travel towards Mtiuleti and Khevi provinces via one of the oldest roads in Georgia, which the Russian Tsar Alexander I named the



Ananuri Architectural Complex

The Soul of Georgia

Cultural tour (15 days)



Typical house in mountain village

Georgian Military Highway, **Places to visit:** Mtskheta, Ananuri architectural complex (16th-17th centuries), Gergeti Trinity church (14th century), Dariali and Truso valleys; **◆Days 7: Gudauri - Gori - Bakuriani** From the mountains we return to Kartli, the heart of the country. Known for its agriculture, Kartli is rich in architectural monuments. Gori is the birthplace of Georgia's most infamous son, Joseph Stalin. We follow the River Mtkvari upstream to higher mountains and darker forests, and finally enter the Borjomi valley. In the spa town of Borjomi, first the Romanov kings and more recently, Stalin had their summer residences. The verdant valley is ideal for forest walks and sampling the Borjomi waters. **Places to visit:** The rock-cut town of Uplistsikhe (6th century BC-6th century AD), Stalin's museum, Timotesubani temple (13th century), Romanovs' Palace in Likani;

beautiful lush scenery of the Borjomi valley, we travel to the dry landscape of Samtskhe-Javakheti, an area where some of the oldest settlements in Georgia are located. Here on the border of Turkey and Georgia, we find the monastery complex of Vardzia, carved out of a cliff face. Vardzia was the main seminary for southwest Georgia from the 12th century. Queen Tamar lived here, and the complex is testament to the renaissance period in which she ruled; **◆Day 9: Bakuriani - Kutaisi** The next province we will visit is Imereti with its cool springs, green fields, and delicate, manicured gardens. It is here that you find the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Colchis - Kutaisi, now the second city of Georgia. The people of Imereti are renowned for their sense of humour, politeness, and a special kind of "khachapuri", the cheese-bread unique to Georgia; **◆Day 10:**

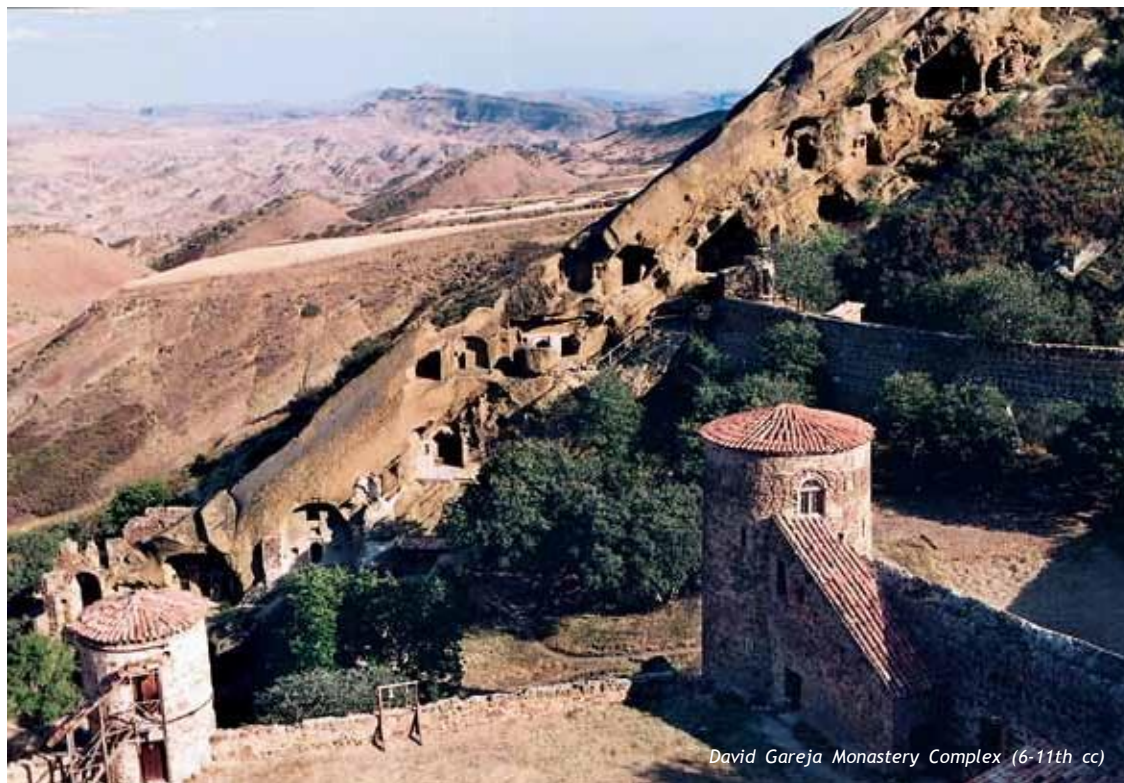


Mt. Kazbegi (5047m)

in Kutaisi Gelati and Bagrati Monasteries are first to visit in Imereti region; **◆Day 11: Kutaisi - Batumi;** **◆Day 12: Batumi** Through Guria, the land of Georgian citrus and tea, we travel to Ajara. Here Georgia welcomed Roman and Greek trade ships, and bade farewell to the caravans travelling from the east. We will enjoy a day at the shore of the Black Sea in the Ajara capital, Batumi; **◆Day**

The Path of the Holy Syrian Fathers

Cultural tour (15 days)



David Gareja Monastery Complex (6-11th cc)

Over these next 12 days, you will travel the path of the Holy Syrian Fathers. You will visit many architectural monuments in Kartli, Kakheti, Imereti, and Samtskhe-Javakheti, which trace the history of Georgian Christianity. Early Georgian architects paid particular attention to how their constructions harmonised with the surrounding landscape and in fact their work was very often inspired by the natural beauty of Georgia's environment.

At the beginning of the 4th century AD, St. Nino of Capadocia brought Christianity to Georgia. In the year 337, Christianity was proclaimed as the state religion of Georgia, although it was not until some one hundred years later that it became firmly established.

The 13 Holy Syrian Fathers from Antioch were responsible for strengthening Christianity in Georgia. They founded several monastery complexes in Kartli and Kakheti, and turned these two regions of Georgia into centers of Christian culture. Later David Gareja, Shiomghvime, Zedazeni, Alaverdi, Nekresi, Samtavisi and other cathedrals were built on the site of former monasteries.

Our tour begins in Kartli. In Mtskheta, St. Nino erected the first Christian cross and the first churches were built here. The cross of St. Nino is now held in the Sioni Cathedral. We will visit the monasteries of Shiomghvime and Zedazeni which were built on former pagan sites. **Places to visit:** Tbilisi: Anchiskhati (6-7th century), Sioni Cathedral (7th century), Mamadaviti monastery (6th-19th century), Kashveti church (6th-19th century), Betania monastery (12-13th century), treasury of Fine Arts Museum. Mtskheta: Jvari monastery (6-7th century), Zedazeni monastery (6-8th century), Shiomghvime monastery (6th century), Svetitskhoveli cathedral (11th century), Tsilkani (4-17th century). Then onwards to Imereti. Kutaisi, the former capital of western Georgia is the cultural centre of this area. It was from here that King David IV ("The

Builder") began the unification of Georgia. He also founded the Gelati Academy, where he is buried. The Academy holds the only remaining portrait of the King. Imereti: Gelati (10-11th century), Motsameta (8-10th century), Martvili (7-10th century), Nikortsminda (11th century). **From Imereti we drive to southern Georgia - Samtskhe-Javakheti and Tori provinces**, where we can explore Vardzia (12-13th century), the Vani caves (8-15th century), Khertvisi (2nd century BC - 11th century AD), Sapara (10th century) and Timotesubani (13th century). **Shida (Inner) Kartli:** Samtavisi (11th century), Uplistsikhe (2nd century BC), Ateni Sioni (7th century), Kintsvisi (13th century), Urbnisi (5-6th century), Breti (6-9th century), Ulumba (6-19th century), Kvemo (Lower) Kartli: Tsugrugasheni (11th century), Dmanisi (6-7th century). **The Last province of our trip is Kakheti**, where we visit: Alaverdi (11th century), Ikalto Academy (11-12th century), Martkhopi (6-7th century) Khirsa (6th century), Nekresi (6-9th century), Gremi (16-17th century), Shuamta (6-16th century) and David Gareja monastery (6-11th century). The monastery of David Gareja, built in the desert by the Saint father David, is the holiest place in Georgia. It is said that visiting the David Gareja monastery three times is equivalent to one visit to Jerusalem. In the past, a world famous school of fresco painting thrived within the monastery. Many of the frescos which survive today on the walls of the monastery date back to the 9th century.

- ◆ Day 1: arrival in Tbilisi; ◆ Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing;
- ◆ Day 3: Tbilisi - Mtskheta - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 4: Tbilisi - Kutaisi; ◆ Day 5: Kutaisi; ◆ Day 6: Kutaisi - Vani - Kutaisi; ◆ Day 7: Kutaisi - Nikortsminda - Borjomi;
- ◆ Day 8: Borjomi - Vardzia - Borjomi; ◆ Day 9: Borjomi - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 10: Tbilisi - Dmanisi - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 11: Tbilisi - Telavi; ◆ Day 12: Telavi; ◆ Day 13: Telavi - Tbilisi;
- ◆ Day 14: Tbilisi - Betania - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 15: Departure.

The Land of the Golden Fleece

Cultural tour with 1 day hiking (12 days)

In the 6th century BC, the tribes of western Georgia formed a state, the Kingdom of Colchis, lying along the east coast of the Black Sea. Colchis is the land where the epic legend of the Argonauts was acted out. The legend tells of the courageous Hellenes who, led by Jason, crossed the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorous, reached the shores of the Kingdom of Colchis where the powerful King Aetes reigned, and where the Golden Fleece was kept. Ancient Colchis held the secret of how to obtain gold; the discovery of this secret and the acquisition of the golden fleece was the Argonauts' quest.



View of mt. Ushba, Svaneti Province

◆ **Day 1: arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi - Kutaisi** Our first encounter with the culture of Colchis begins with a visit to the ancient town of Vani where some of the finest examples of ancient artefacts are kept in the Vani Archaeological Museum; ◆ **Day 3: Kutaisi - Mestia** We set off for Svaneti. We drive up the Enguri Gorge where the first inhabitants, mainly gold prospectors, settled in ancient times. It was here that most of the Colchis gold was obtained. For centuries the Svan ethnic group evolved here, cut off from the outside world by the high and inaccessible mountains, their culture preserved almost intact. In earlier centuries Svaneti was a recognised part of the Kingdom of Colchis; ◆ **Days 4: Mestia;** ◆ **Day 5: Mestia - Ushguli** In our journey through Mestia and Ushguli we will find medieval watch-towers, the unique technology for obtaining gold, the Svan school of iconography and metalwork, the ritual of worshipping spirits, the fertility cults, the wolf and the bull, the poetic muse of Svans - Dali, the golden-haired goddess of hunting: we will experience this mystical and fascinating world for

saint, Queen Tamar (12-13th century), had her summer and winter residences. Queen Tamar is revered by Svans as the symbol of a strong and rich Georgia; ◆ **Days 6: Ushguli - Mestia;** ◆ **Day 7: Mestia - Becho** On the way from Ushguli to Mestia we will see the church of St. Kvirike (1112 AD). Kvirikoba is the most important festival in Svaneti. Kviria, an ancient Georgian pagan deity, was protector of the fertility of soil, man and animals. Despite prohibition by the Synod, sacrificial rituals are still practised in the Christian churches of Svaneti. The frescos of the Lamaria church (10th -12th century) in Ushguli and the Church of St. George in Nakipari (1130 AD) are unique in their design and beauty for the period. In Mestia, the regional centre of Svaneti, we will visit the historical and ethnological museum which houses manuscripts from the 10th and 12th centuries, religious tracts from the 9th- 11th centuries, icons, metal and other artefacts of the 14th -16th centuries, gold coins of the antique and late antique periods, and several Bronze Age treasures. The museums of Svan architecture and mountaineering in Mestia are very informative.

From Mestia, we will continue to Becho from where we will hike to the waterfalls of Ushba, the sovereign mountain of Svaneti; ◆ **Day 8: Becho- Batumi** After 7-8 hours of travelling, we will arrive in Batumi, one of the oldest cities in Georgia and inhabited from as early as the third century BC. Batumi is mentioned by Greek and Roman sources as one of the Black Sea's principal ports; ◆ **Day 9: Batumi;** ◆ **Day 10: Batumi - Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 11: Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 12: Departure.**

In this tour we shall explore the lands of this ancient legend. We will visit the provinces of Georgia connected with the adventure of the Argonauts; Imereti, Samegrelo, Svaneti and Ajara.

*Golden figure of a Lion.
2500-3000 BC*

*Temple pendants
(4th century BC)*



Explore The Secrets of The Ancient Land

*Archaeological tour (12
Days)*

This program has been designed to develop new, essential knowledge about Georgia, its cultural heritage and unique archaeological sites by visiting Dmanisi, the medieval site where archaeologists unexpectedly came across the remains of ancient men. The Dmanisi remains are the oldest and the most primitive in Eurasia. We will explore Dzalisi archeological site, once the second Capital of Kartli Kingdom. The site represents an amazing architectural complex and burial ground of the first settlements, dating back to the second millennium BC; Next site to visit is Vani, the capital of legendary Colchis, where excavations revealed the sanctuary with traces of fire, numerous potteries and figurines of animals, sacrificial grounds, clay vessels, cult ritual remains, objects of household and weapons; We will also visit such sites as Nokalakevi, a unique Political and historical center of Western Georgia between the 4-6th cc

We invite you to visit some of the most important and unique archaeological sites of the country and learn about the cultural heritage and other secrets kept by this ancient land. Here discoveries are still waiting their turn...

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi** Sightseeing tour with visit to State History Museum and its treasury; ◆ **Day 3: Dmanisi** – Day trip to visit Dmanisi archaeological site, beautifully located at the confluence of two rivers; ◆ **Day 4: Tbilisi** - **Mtskheta – Tsikheagora** The day trip will spent in heart of Kartli province; visit old settlements of Mtskheta as well as Multilayered site of Tsikheagora which revealed a large Architectural complex belonging to the Hellenistic period; ◆ **Day 5: Tbilisi - Uplistsikhe - Kutaisi** Drive to Kutaisi, en route short stoop to visit Samtavisi cathedral and archaeological site, where excavations are still in course; Also visit Uplistsikhe cave town; ◆ **Day 6: Kutaisi** - **Vani - Kutaisi** Today we will explore Vani - The capital of legendary Colchis, we will visit the ancient town and some of the finest examples of ancient artifacts kept in the Vani Archaeological museum; ◆ **Day 7: Kutaisi** - **Batumi** Drive to Black Sea Shore; en rout to Batumi visit Pichvnari archaeological site; ◆ **Day 8: Batumi** Today we will explore Batumi, one of the oldest cities in Georgia, inhabited from the third century BC. Visit Gonio fortress and Batumi Archaeological museum; ◆ **Day 9: Batumi - Borjomi** drive to explore Nokalakevi archaeological site, surrounded from the three sides by the river Tekhura and protected by the three lines of the high walls; ◆ **Day 10: Borjomi - Akhalkalaki - Tbilisi** Explore Javakheti Area and drive to Tbilisi; ◆ **Day 11: Tbilisi - Dzalisi - Tbilisi** Day trip to visit Dzalisi archaeological site and its impressive mosaics; ◆ **Day 12: Departure.**

Visitors to Dmanisi will find in one and the same location, an important medieval site, picturesque scenery and the most ancient hominoid remains found in Eurasia in the course of archaeological excavations (which go on from June to October).

Specially invited lecturer, one of the leading Georgian archaeologists will introduce to you the recent discoveries.

Huge jars used for burial purposes



The Hidden Corners of

Ethnolo

rys

Caucasus Mountains and lowlands with fascinating landscapes and its inhabitants. We will explore the less travelled “corners” in the isolation of the Caucasus Mountains with turbulent histories, lifestyle, ethnological diversity, unique festivals and secret rituals.



Akvani - Baby Cradle easy to hide and transport in period of war and together with mother's lullaby rocking child to sleep and sweet dreams in period of peace.

Isindi - Georgian Folk Game, once part of military training, still today is popular in Guria & Imereti

Kakheti - meet a local family in Napareuli, enjoy old wine-makers company, share their experience in wine nursing and taste home-made wines. **Tusheti** - feel the spirit of knighthood and hospitality. Deep river gorges, narrow paths, abounding in smoke houses, brave horsemen, secrets of rituals and lively festivals harmoniously blend here. As in the past, today festivals are held in Tusheti with rituals of sacrifice, brewing beer and preparation of the best traditional dishes. We may just watch or take part in breathtaking horse races, meet old hunters armed with time forgotten hunting rifles, listen stories about their forefathers who were cattle-breeders and brave warriors. **Guria** - here people still perform ancient rituals dedicated to deity, which protects viticulture and fertility. **Svaneti** - Religious traditions were an important part of life for the Svan ethnic group. The mystical ritual of worshipping spirits, the cults of fertility and fire are typical for this fascinating world. Svan people perform polyphonic songs, extremely unique fiery dances and observe rituals with a great deal of care. For centuries Svan people were building towers and bridges, making hats and coats from felt - pressed wool known as “teka”, creating poems and songs, passing all of these from generation to generation. Cuisine of Svaneti is exceptionally delicate and diverse throughout the Caucasus region. Svan people developed gold-prospecting, field-farming, endemic sorts of wheat, cattle-breeding and exceptional quality dairy production.

Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi; Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing tour; **Day 3: Tbilisi - Telavi;** Venturing east to Kakheti province famous for its wines. Visit medieval city of Signagi; **Day 4: Telavi - Omalo;** Travel through unexplored villages of Tusheti; **Day 5: Tusheti area;** enjoying accordion music and lyric songs while sitting around fire; **Day 6: Omalo - Telavi;** We will sample fresh-baked bread and fresh milk for a breakfast, experience strict customs and countryside life. We will taste local vodka and cheese made by shepherds and enjoy natural hot baths on the way back to wine country; **Day 7: Telavi - Borjomi;** In the Spa town of Borjomi sample the Borjomi mineral waters, meet old masters of wooden furniture and experience a company of fishermen; **Day 8: Borjomi - Chokhatauri;** **Day 9: Guria area;** we will be invited for a dinner at locals' house. Our hosts will serve very fresh natural products and lead the feast with special toasts including the great sense of humor; **Day 10: Chokhatauri - Becho;** Our journey will follow Jason and the Argonauts into the ancient province of Svaneti; **Day 11: Becho - Mestia; Day 12: Mestia - Ushguli; Day 13: Ushguli - Mestia; Day 14: Mestia - Tbilisi;** In the end of our trip we will visit village of ceramic masters, where the technology of making ceramic vessels comes from ancient times; **Day 15: Departure.**

Georgian bagpipe - Called Gudastviri in Ajara province, Chibori in Racha, Chuniri in Svaneti,



This tour involves travelling through two radically different highland regions of Georgia - Khevsureti and Svaneti. It will be especially attractive to those who are interested in ethnology, tower architecture, mountain nature and highland people's life.

*Village Shatili
Khevsureti province*

Turning off the Georgian Military Highway at a point 60 kilometres from Tbilisi and taking a mountain road, after a two to three hour drive we will find ourselves in a completely different world. This is the kingdom of towers: Khevsureti, where traditions and customs are as severe as the countryside itself. The people of Khevsuri were famous all over Georgia for their brevity and straightforwardness. No mercy was given to those who betrayed the tribe. Their poetry is unique and Khevsuri people often talk to each other in verse. During the summer the Khevsuri tend their cattle, spin wool and make cheese and butter. Traditionally they hunted bears and mountain goats. In days gone, hunters used to make ritual sacrifices to the gods who protect animals in order to ensure a successful hunt.

During the long winter days the Khevsuri drink home-made beer and zhipitauri (a sort of vodka) in towers beautifully decorated with kilims, hides and wild goat horns whilst listening to Panduri (Georgian national musical instrument) music. Ladies dressed in home-made coloured stockings and wearing beads serve trays of hot khinkali. No other people in the Caucasus wear such finely embroidered clothes as the Khevsuri.

We will visit Shatili, a village in the heart of Khevsureti where we will climb one of the towers.

Khevsureti is one among very few places left in Georgia, where you can still see people dressed in traditional costumes - all handmade, richly decorated by embroidery, appliqué and beads.

◆ Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi; ◆ Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing tour; ◆ Day 3: Tbilisi - Shatili; ◆ Day 4: Shatili; ◆ Day 5: Shatili - Gudauri; ◆ Day 6: Gudauri - Kazbegi - Gudauri; ◆ Day 7: Gudauri - Khada - Kutaisi; ◆ Day 8: Kutaisi - Mestia; ◆ Day 9: Mestia; ◆ Day 10: Mestia - Ushguli; ◆ Day 11: Ushguli; ◆ Day 12: Ushguli - Mestia; ◆ Day 13: Mestia - Kutaisi; ◆ Day 14: Kutaisi - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 15: Departure.

Places to visit

Pshav - Khevsureti: "Giants Settlement": Khakhmati St. George Cross (it is said, that Khakhmati was a protector - deity of fertility, cattle and horses, and used to lead the Khevsuri people into battle in far off lands); Shatili fortress village; Anatori Cross - the deity who protects animals; Anatori vaults - where you can see the skeletons of people killed by plague lying on stone shelves.

Mtiuleti: Khada Gorge, mentioned in historical annals as the gorge of 60 towers.

Imereti: Ubisi church (9th -10th cc). painted

The Kingdom of Towers

Cultural tour with 1 day hiking (15 days)

Travelling through the high mountain villages of the Caucasus, the spirit of knighthood, preserved here for centuries comes alive. Deep river gorges, narrow paths, stone houses, tiny, swift Caucasian horses, wild horsemen, folk bards, mystical rituals, cults of fire and spirits and ancient fairy-tales here harmoniously blend. Secret festivals in winter time lead us to the far past of this unpredictable land. Access to Svaneti is available every season. The road remain opened even during coldest months of the year.



Ushguli.
One of the highest inhabited places in the world.
Svaneti province

Ushguli is a UNESCO World Heritage Site



Children from mountain village

Having crossed several provinces, we arrive in Svaneti, once a part of the Kingdom of Colchis. Many travellers have written about this part of the world. This land is unique in terms of its countryside, and its traditions which remain unchanged for centuries. The form and building principles of the Svan towers have retained the wisdom of their architects, with their trim small paned churches and hospitable people. The towers survived during the earthquakes, avalanches and landslides. These old towers still protect people from the severe climate and natural disasters.

Every visitor here is treated to hot khachapuri and a special dish called "kubdari" (bread with meat stuffing). While in Svaneti do not miss trying local dishes and "rakhi" (a sort of vodka).

Svan people have many semi-pagan rituals, which they observe with great care. Amongst their many gods are the principal ones who protect animals and human beings and which give them fertility and the minor gods who care for the soul and protect fire. Svan people have many polyphonic songs and their ancient lyrics and poetry tell us about their forefathers who were gold miners, cattle-breeders and farmers.

Places to visit

Svaneti: Mestia and Ushguli medieval churches painted in the 9-12th cc by Michael Maglakeli and Tevdore. Mestia historic-ethnographical museum, where ancient manuscripts, metalwork icons and crosses, decorations and coins of the late antique period, and ethnographical utensils are kept.

In the winter, most move to the lowland area of Kakheti. The Tushs were granted land in these parts by a Kakheti's king as a token of the great courage they displayed in repelling successive Persian invaders. The king knew of the diligence and perseverance of the Tushs and gave them the fertile marshlands in the hope that this hardworking people



For five months a year, the only possible means of transportation for locals is a helicopter. Most pilots are local Tushs and have thousands of hours experience flying over the mountains.

◆ **Day 1: arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi - Alvani** By travelling through Kakheti we will arrive at the Tusheti village of Alvani. Tusheti villages are situated along the eastern bank of the River Alazani. To the north, they are bordered by the high Caucasian mountains. It is in Alvani, this magnificent site situated on the boundary of plentiful Kakheti and remote Tusheti that we will sojourn for the night and enjoy traditional Tusheti cuisine; ◆ **Day 3: Alvani - Shtrolta** The distance between Alvani and Shtrolta is only 61 kilometers. But brace yourselves! We climb higher and higher up a winding dirt track on which no cars were seen until 1978. After a strenuous journey of two and a half hours and having crossed the Kojia Pass, altitude 3,000m, we will leave civilization behind us for a week. The valleys of Kakheti disappear into the green behind us and ahead lies Tusheti, the shrouded mystery of Georgia, waiting to be discovered; ◆ **Day 4: Shtrolta - Omalo**
- **Shenako - Diklo** Omalo is the economic centre of Tusheti where the only airport, boarding school and hospital in the region are located. On our way to Omalo, we see our first Tusheti tower. These towers used to function as fortifications as well as places of worship. From Omalo, we continue to the village of Shenako. The technique of building houses without foundations is unique to Tusheti. We continue our trip to the village of Diklo, where we stay overnight in the Campsite;

As in the past, today festivals are held in Tusheti with ritual of sacrifice, brewing beer and preparation of the best traditional dishes

Sheep may interrupt your voyage for a while. Be careful when making pictures! Sheepdogs guard them and may



would turn these lands into productive



Sweet songs of Tushs tell storied of high mountains, brave hearts of the heroes, friendship and love.

Caucasus Mountain Life

Cultural tour with 3 days hiking (8 days)

Breathing fresh mountain air, surrounded by cool springs and rivers and verdant valleys, nurtured by fairy-tales and mothers lullabies makes the local kid's life full of joy and excitement.



◆ **Day 5: Diklo - Chigho - Dartlo - (Pirikita Tusheti gorge)** This will be one of our busiest days. After 3-4 steady hours of climbing mountain paths, we will cross the Sonekhi Pass (2550 m.) and descend to the village of Chigho (2400 m.) renowned for its 'Lasharoba' festival. Lashari was a fighting deity whose banner led the Tushs into war. From Chigho we will return to the village of Dartlo (1666 m.) where we will spend the night in the Camp; ◆ **Day 6: Dartlo - Jvarboseli - Tsovata - Shtrolta (Gometsri gorge)** This will be our last day in Tusheti. We will drive through the wooded Gometsari Gorge and have dinner in the village of Jvarboseli. Here, a contest is held annually where young men from different valleys meet and compete in horse riding, wrestling, dancing and singing. In the nearby Tsovati Gorge we will have a chance to explore tombs dating from the 1700s. An epidemic in this period completely wiped out some of the villages in the region. Many of those who contracted the plague voluntarily isolated themselves in these tombs. Allegedly some of the sick even recovered as a result of their enforced starvation. Towards evening we will return to Shtrolta, where our journey into the past begins. Memories of velvety mountains, the blue Alazani towers perched on cliffs and the open-hearted Tushs will merge into the softness of the night to melodic accordion playing and mournful singing voices; ◆ **Day 7: Shtrolta - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 8: Departure.**



This is not "self-catering". This is how some of our guests integrate into the local environment in the mountains.



In Tusheti you will be served with "kotori" (bread with cheese & potato filling), "guda" (Tush's sheep cheese), and of course "zhipitauri" (local vodka) and home-made beer which is specially prepared for each festival.

Through the lens of your camera explore the country
of marvellous cluster of culture, land of legends and myth, ancient architecture and diversity



Prince of Svaneti
The famous Italian traveller
and photographer Vittorio
Sella has visited Georgia in
1889 -1896 and depicted
villager's everyday life and
impressive landscapes of
Caucasus Highlands.

In the search of the best shot we invite you to explore the most ancient and intact areas of Georgian ancient land; Follow the legendary trade routs and twisty roads of picturesque villages. Marvel of variety of landscapes from the high peaks of Caucasus mountain ranges, severe and rocky passes littered by watch towers or immersed in white veil of clouds to arid areas of steppes and deserts, fertile lands and lush subtropics. Have a look at wooden houses of lowlands and dwelling towers of villages high in the mountains. Look into the eyes of locals, and through their portraits try to tell the story of this country and its people.

◆ **Day 1: Arrival In Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi** sightseeing Tour; explore old town, its inner yards, carved wooden balconies, and decorated gates; ◆ **Day 3: Day trip to Tetrtskaro Region;** ◆ **Day 4: Tbilisi - Signagi - Telavi;** Visit Signagi royal town and explore Kiziki site; ◆ **Day 5: Telavi - Gudauri;** Visit vineyards and wine cellars; meet local people; ◆ **Day 6: Gudauri - Kazbegi;** On the way to high peaks to Caucasus mountain range explore villages of Bodorna and Khada Gorge; ◆ **Day 7: Kazbeg - Gudauri;** Explore ancient villages of Sno Gorge, which impress the visitor with original architecture and largely unaffected landscapes by the modern civilization; ◆ **Day 8: Gudauri - Kutaisi;** Today we will travel to the heart of Kartli province, agricultural centre of Georgia. Drive through the town Gori, birthplace of Joseph Stalin. In this area passed the Silk Road. Here we will explore local villages, rich with the ruins of century old fortresses; ◆ **Day 9: Kutaisi - Mestia** visit local agricultural market and Kutaisi UNESCO sites. In afternoon drive north along Enguri Gorge; ◆ **Day 10: Mestia - Ushguli - Mestia;** Explore Ushguli UNESCO site and its unique dwelling towers; ◆ **Day 11: Mestia - Batumi;** Explore Mestia and drive to Black Sea shore town Batumi; ◆ **Day 12: Batumi - Borjomi;** ◆ **Day 13: Borjomi - Tabatskutri lake - Tbilisi;** Pass the areas once crossed by Silk Road; ◆ **Day 14: Day trip to Bolnisi,** Sightseeing of Dmanisi Villages; ◆ **Day 15: Departure.**

*It is not a piece of art but
just a great memory of your
trip in Georgia*

Life in Colors and Ornaments

Craft & Art tour (8 days)

Georgian Folk Art is a treasury and pride of Georgian people which serves as a bridge between the present and the past. Today the ancient traditions and techniques are reflected in contemporary pieces of Art...



This program is designed to give an overview of the highlights of folk arts and crafts which form the essential part of Georgian culture and lifestyle. Traditional ornaments and the use of colors are revived in carpets, felt rugs, stockings and embroidery.

Huge jars and different shaped vessels are made in the village Shrosha, where pottery secrets are kept and known in every family. Black smith and metal work as well as wood carving have many centuries' traditions and history.

The cloisonné enamelwork has deep roots in Georgia. The collections of medieval cloisonné enamels, kept in museums represent the high artistic standards of this particular art.

Today cloisonné enamelwork, as well as, felt and embroidery have a new development in Georgian contemporary art. This techniques has unlimited possibilities, in terms of following old traditions, but also in contributing to modern art.



We invite you to get acquainted to Georgian arts and crafts, visit numerous museums, workshops and artists' studios; meet craftsmen living in remote areas, visit important architectural monuments and mural paintings.

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi** sightseeing tour including museum treasuries and cathedrals, Old town and sulphur bath-houses, artists studios and museum of Folk and Applied Arts; ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi - Kutaisi;** Visit the ancient capital Mtskheta and its UNESCO heritage sites; en rout to Kutaisi glance at pottery market and meet local craftsmen; ◆ **Day 4: Kutaisi - Tbilisi;** Explore UNESCO heritage sites of Kutaisi: Bagrati cathedral and Gelati Academy complex with its impressive mosaics and mural painting; on the way back to Tbilisi meet local craftsmen; ◆ **Day 5: Tbilisi** visit Tbilisi Silk Museum and Open Air Ethnographical museum and its unique collection, meet textile artists, attend on workshops; ◆ **Day 6: Tbilisi - Telavi;** Explore Kakheti wine producing region and visit its spectacular architectural and religious sites. Meet with local women who work to support each other in the exploration and recreation secrets of traditional textile arts; ◆ **Day 7: Telavi - Tbilisi;** Visit cultural sites, be a guest in a local family and enjoy the company of "Tamada" - Toastmaster; ◆ **Day 8: Departure.**

In Love & Sorrow with Sounds of Music

Musical tour (10 Days)



Singing has always been a part of life in all its different stages: work, celebrations and weddings, war time, passing away of someone dear... It's a bridge between the past and present; something very close to Georgian's heart and very much beloved by old and new generations.

The songs, the dances and the faith have always been the essential part of Georgian life. From the polyphonic singing which predates Christianity and helps to discover and convey Georgia, the sound of traditional musical instruments - Salamuri (pipe), Chonguri and Panduri, the soul and culture of the romantic "city songs" about love and women, to the breathtaking notes of bag pipe, heart beating rhythms of Tam-tam and remote melodies of hurdy-gurdy player. Magnificence and beauty of Georgian songs and dances can not be forgotten by anyone who has ever seen or heard it.

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi** Sightseeing tour visiting, important religious and cultural sites; Museum of Arts and Crafts and its rich collection of musical instruments; During the sightseeing, enjoy religious songs sung by Children's Choir in one of ancient churches. During lunch and dinner learn more about "Kalakuri simgera"- early 20th century songs of Tbilisi town, and "Zurna Duduki"- bag pipe music, which will take you far in the past of the town; ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi - Telavi** Drive to the fertile lands of Kakheti, en rout attend "panduri" workshop and visit Tsinandali Family Estate; During dinner, polyphony ensemble will join you to marvell with the phenomenon of georgian traditional music and legendary "Mravakjamieri"-Hymn to long life; ◆ **Day 4: Telavi - Alvani - Tbilisi** Drive to Alvani village - gates to Tusheti area and high peaks of Caucasus mountain range. Here poetry and music accompanied by accordion will tell you stories of mountains. During dinner in Tbilisi hurdy-gurdy player will join you; ◆ **Day 5: Tbilisi - Mtskheta - Kutaisi** Visit UNESCO sites of Mtskheta and drive to Kutaisi, capital of Colchis where Kutaisi State ensemble will be waiting for you; ◆ **Day**

6: Kutaisi - Mestia Explore UNESCO sites of Kutaisi and drive to Svaneti remote areas; ◆ **Day 7: Mestia** Visit Mestia Ethnographical museum and have dinner in Svan Dwelling tower; enjoy powerful and thrilling songs of Svans; ◆ **Day 8: Mestia - Batumi** From mountains drive to Black Sea Shore; Enjoy exciting dances and songs of Ajara province; ◆ **Day 9: Batumi - Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 10: Departure.**



Georgian City Life - Day and Night

Culture and Entertainment (9 days)

You will never be able to convince the citizen of Tbilisi, Signagi, Kutaisi or Batumi, that there is another place in the world nicer, closer to the heart or more beautiful than their dear town...



Signagi is a town of smiling faces and abundant variety of wines, wooden balconies overlooking the narrow streets and small benches near the gateways, the meeting place for the oldest generation.

In Kutaisi the sense of humor and tasty food is as important as the life itself! The sweet sounds of traditional melodies seem to come from every yard. The locals call their home town Kutaisi a town of roses and love.

Batumi is famous for its hospitality, where you are welcomed in every house and specially made coffee is offered to every guest. Taking walk along the boulevard is almost a ritual here. The main port of the town serves as a favorite meeting place for all generations. In this coastal city even Khatchapuri (Ajaruli khatchapuri – Bread with cheese filling) has a shape of ship...

Exploring each town day and night you will surely find something of your taste and interest in each of them.

Tbilisi - Walking along Rustaveli Avenue, in the shadow of old cedar trees will make you feel the spirit of Tbilisi. You'll meet local artists and listen to street musicians, discover galleries and handcrafts of various tastes at flea markets and carpet shops, sample fresh baked bread and enjoy glass of wine in fashionable cafés along the narrow streets of the old town. Where else could you find people discussing politics, fashion, art and gossip as passionately as here?

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi** sightseeing tour visiting Opera house and Rustaveli Drama Theatre, galleries of the modern art and artists' studios; ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi - Signagi - Tbilisi;** Day trip to 18th century royal town, today town of wine and festivals; ◆ **Day 4: Tbilisi - Kutaisi;** Explore Kutaisi, former capital of western Georgia and the second biggest town of the country; ◆ **Day 5: Kutaisi - Batumi;** ◆ **Day 6: Batumi;** Visit Batumi Sea shore town, the favorite place to spend summer for all the citizens of Georgia; have a walk in Boulevard and in Port; ◆ **Day 7: Batumi - Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 8: Tbilisi;** Explore Tbilisi museums and enjoy night life in local pubs and cafés; ◆ **Day 9: Departure.**

Sharden street in Tbilisi is the main attraction of Tbilisi always leading to special "finds", a place with variety of cafés, galleries, studios and gift shops.

Elene akhvlediani House Museum

The studio of Elene Akhvlediani, in one of the Tbilisi twisting streets, was indeed a cultural center. The place where artists, actors, musicians, poets and her numerous friends often gathered. Elene Akhvlediani, started her works in the early decades of the twentieth century. These masters' achievements, based on the legacy of national and European cultures, have largely determined the distinctive features of Georgian art and have not lost their importance to this day.

Explore National Parks and protected areas spread from subtropics and wetlands to high peaks of Caucasus mountain range, steeps and deserts.

Tusheti Protected Area, covering 76,004 hectares, is one of the greatest parks in Europe. Tusheti with its pine-tree forests, alpine and sub-alpine meadows, untouched Rhododendron Caucasicum, inhabited with Caucasian goats, rich flora and fauna, is one of the most attractive places in the country and in the whole Caucasus Region. Variety of animals and birds, inhabiting the area, is very rare by the national and global scale. The endemic level of plants is amazingly high. Among the endemic animals, there have to be distinguished: Caucasian black grouse, Caucasian snow-cock and East Caucasian leopard. Other inhabitants of the area are: bezoar, deer, roe deer, chamois, bear, wolf, lynx and other.

Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park is the first National Park in the Caucasus. It is situated in the central part of Georgia at the border of three natural regions, which determines the difficult surface of park's landscape. A humid climate of Kolkheti Plain meets the dry mountain climate of the Anatoly-North Iran. The soil is mainly composed of tertiary sediments and volcanic materials and is exceedingly rich in tertiary period fossils. Lush gorges and canyons, volcanic plateaus, petrified lava flows, etc. rank the region among dream destinations for travellers.

Lagodekhi Nature Reserve was established almost 100 years ago. It represents the oldest well preserved natural landscape of the country. Almost one fourth of the flora of Georgia, up to 1500 species, can be found in this relatively small area –only 25 thousand hectares total. Extremely rich vegetation, landscape and favourable climate have created conditions for the incredibly diverse wildlife. This area is a habitat of a Caucasian red deer, European roe deer, Eurasian lynx, brown bear, presenting Lagodekhi as a Caucasian Oasis.

Kolkheti National Park is distinguished by its thick hydrographical network of the rivers, lakes, bogs. The Paliastomy Lake is the biggest water collecting basin in Georgia; the whole area is characterized by relatively high humidity and warm damp climate. Coastal sand dunes along the Black Sea support a number of rare plants; Kolkheti wetlands host variety of plants and animals adapted to yearly floods. It is a home for fish, other amphibians and reptiles.

Vashlovani National Park can be considered as an important reserve of cultural plants, wild predecessors and genetic pool of forms. There are many interesting paleontologic, cultural and historic places in the park. At the same time, this is a place of highest concentration of reptiles and mammals in Georgia. Most of them are rare kinds of species which are at the verge of extinction globally. Description of the region relief, its geologic characterizers, hydrology, climate and soils importantly differ from other regions of Georgia. The height above the sea level of Vashlovani National Park is between 100, 800 and 900 meters. it is characterized by important dryness of climate and overheat.

Caucasus leopard
– in 2003 caught on
remote-sensing cameras
in Vashlovani National
Park. Don't hope to
see a lone leopard
named "Noah", but it's
somewhere near



...explore Georgia's legacy

Georgia is an ancient country and it is obvious that it includes a large variety of historic and cultural landscapes that are centuries old. These harmonious landscapes represent only a part of Georgia's beautiful legacy. The uniqueness of the country is provided mainly by the diversity of Georgia's untouched natural heritage.

Georgia possesses a biodiversity of global significance. The principal landscapes of the Caucasus include foothill and mountain forests and the subalpine meadows of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus; treeless mountain upland plateaus of the Lesser Caucasus; humid lowland forests of Kolkheti in western Georgia, and the arid steppe and deserts of Iori Plateau. In East Georgia between the Caucasus Major and Minor ranges of central and eastern Georgia, the flora and fauna of at least three biogeographic provinces converge, resulting in high levels of biodiversity. In this region are found species typical to Europe (e.g., bear, lynx, chamois, red deer), to the Caucasus (e.g., Caucasian tur or mountain goat, leopard), and to the Middle East regions (e.g., hyena, gazelle). In addition to the increase in the number of species resulting from its biogeographic history, the varied terrain and climatic conditions contribute to a diversity of ecosystems.

Georgian forests contain over 200 plant community associations, and 120 species of trees, 250 bushes, and 4,500 species of vascular plants. Of the vascular plants, nine percent are endemic to Georgia and 14 percent are endemic to the Caucasus region. There are 572 vertebrate species (348 species of birds, 95 mammals, 52 reptiles, 13 amphibians, and 64 fish). The diverse and threatened large mammal fauna includes three species of wild goats, chamois, red and roe deer, and their predators, including wolf, lynx, wild cats and possibly even leopard. Some of these species (e.g., wild goats, deer, and wolf) undertake large-scale annual migrations, increasing their susceptibility to habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation, poaching and competition with domestic sheep in order to find food.

The Georgian flora is characterized by its diversity and also the close relatives and progenitors of widely used domestic food plants. A partial list includes a fungus-resistant wheat species (*Triticum zhukovsky*), wild rye endemic, thousand-year old cultivars of rye and barley, wild pears, a domestic cherry ancestor, and over 200 varieties of grapes. A regional millet of exceptional seed production and protein content that was the dominant cereal hundreds of years ago but was replaced by New World corn under Soviet central planning, can still be found in 10-12 fields which now lie fallow.

Caucasus Wildlife

Nature lovers will enjoy hiking in Kazbegi area and Lagodekhi Nature Reserve

Explore Caucasus Flora

Learn about the endemic variety of Georgian Flora

Hiking in the National Parks

In search of adventure, venture in the National Parks

In Search of Rare Birds

Together with ornithologists you will observe unique breeds of birds

Wildlife tour with hiking (15 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Botanical tour (8-14 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eco Tour with hiking (16 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bird watching tour (8-14 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Seasons: Low Good Best

Detailed information on the programmes and our additional Travel Manual are available upon request

W A T E R U P



Caucasus Wildlife

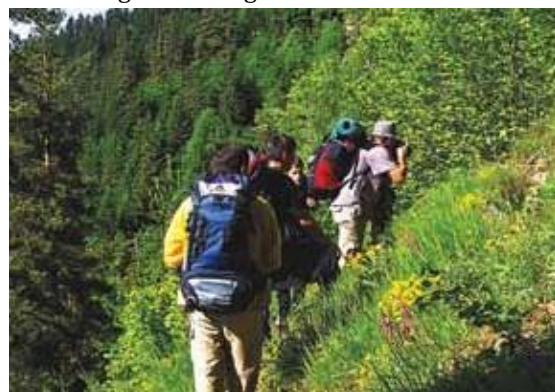
Wildlife tour with
hiking (15 days)

Like many mountain regions of the world, Georgia has a variety of topographical and biogeographical zones which create an environment of diverse and unspoilt habitats. This is reflected in the abundance and variety of wildlife that can be found in Georgia despite its relatively small area. In fact, Georgia has one of the highest levels of endemism in the world, including many protected species of flora and fauna.



In this tour we combine visits to two very different ecological zones. First we travel to the mountain highlands of Kazbegi, where we will spend 4 days observing the wildlife of the region on a variety of low-level treks. The landscape is impressive and severe with alpine meadows dotted with yellow rhododendron, mountain passes and waterfalls, and the marvellous snow-capped Mount Kazbek - Mkinvartsveri - an inactive 5047 meter high volcano. From Kazbegi, we then travel to the east of Georgia, to Lagodekhi Nature reserve, located in the Northeast of the country, on Alazany plain, under the Southern slope of Caucasus mountain range. Here we have ample opportunity to observe the wildlife and go trekking or

horse riding. The reserve marvels visitors with impressive nature, abundance of streams and rivers, high waterfalls and sulfur springs.



◆ Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi; ◆ Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing tour; ◆ Day 3: Tbilisi - Kazbegi;
◆ Day 4: Kazbegi; ◆ Day 5: Kazbegi - Truso valley; ◆ Day 6: Truso valley - Kazbegi;
◆ Day 7: Kazbegi - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 8: Tbilisi - Lagodekhi National Park; ◆ Day 9, 10, 11 and day 12: Lagodekhi Nature Reserve; ◆ Day 13: Return to Tbilisi; ◆ Day 14: Tbilisi; ◆ Day 15: Departure.

Explore Caucasus Flora

anical tour (8-14 days)

The itineraries (as per season) to be provided upon request.



Despite its small territory Georgia is covered with a large variety of vegetation, caused by a considerable difference between the Western and Eastern climates. The structure of the landscape as well as that of the mountain ranges has largely contributed to this geographical system, which has resulted in a high level of endemic variety. Georgian flora comprises around 4,200-4,500 species of vascular plants, 675 mosses, 1763 algae, 6337 fungi, 738 lichens. Out of all the vascular species distributed in Georgia 380 (9.0%)

are endemic to the country and 600 (14.2%) endemic to the Caucasus. Almost 40% of Georgia's territory is covered with various types of forests. Approximately 5% of natural forests are virgin and 40% have kept their primary structure. There are unique formations and ecosystems in Georgia: sub-alpine forests, meadows, wetlands, peat bogs, coniferous and beech forests, oak-wood, narrow mountainous gorges, Mediterranean and semi-Mediterranean formations, steppes, arid light forests and flood-plain forests. Our botanical tours are expedition style tours, organized by Caucasus Travel and guided by professional botanist; it covers most of the formations described above. Choosing this trip you will become familiar with the beauty of Georgian nature.

Endemic species to Georgia and the Caucasus are: Iris Iberica, Hypericum Thethrobicum, Senecio Rhombifolius and other.

Hiking in the National Parks

Eco tour with hiking (16 days)

In search of adventure, venture into the national parks and explore diversity of landscapes from the high peaks of Caucasus mountain range to steeps and deserts, from lush forest and green fields to wetlands and Black Sea shore.



If your choice is hiking in National parks you will traverse almost the whole country and visit all the main national parks of Georgia. You will explore arid steppe and deserts of Iori Plateau and its interesting paleontologic, cultural and historic places; enjoy fresh air of Borjomi-Kharagauli national park and have a walk in lush forests, picturesque gorges and canyons and taste local mineral waters. Explore variety of landscapes of Lagodekhi Nature Reserve and reach the highland of Kazbegi State Reserve; admire the beautiful views of high peaks of Caucasus mountain range and venture to the wetlands of Kolkheti National Park.



◆ Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi; ◆ Day 2: Tbilisi - Lagodekhi; ◆ Day 3: Lagodekhi Nature Reserve; ◆ Day 5: Lagodekhi - Dedoplistskhatro; ◆ Day 6: Vashlovani National Park - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 7 Tbilisi - Kazbegi; ◆ Day 8: Kazbegi State Reserve; ◆ Day 9: Kazbegi - Borjomi; ◆ Day 10: Borjom - Kharagauli National Park; ◆ Day 11: Borjomi - Kharagauli National Park; ◆ Day 12: Borjomi - Kharagauli National Park - Marelisi; ◆ Day 13: Marelisi - Poti; ◆ Day 14: Kolkheti National park; ◆ Day 15: Poti - Tbilisi; ◆ Day 16: Departure.

Bird watching tour (8-14 days)

In Georgia there are approximately 350 bird species, of which over 250 different species are breeders. Georgia lies across a migration corridor between the Black and Caspian Seas, which makes its ornitho-fauna exceptionally diverse.

Our Bird-watching itineraries are expedition-style tours, managed and logistically supported by Caucasus Travel, guided by professional ornithologists, if required. Before offering the programme, we look carefully into our guests' particular interests. The diverse landscape of the country offers a unique opportunity to observe different species in semi-desert, savanna-like landscapes, flood-plain forests, alpine meadows, glaciers and wetlands.

Birds to observe: Bearded Vultures (*Gypaetus Barbatus*), Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron Percnopterus*), Eurasian Black Vultures (*Aegypius Monachus*), Eurasian Griffons (*Gyps Fulvus*), Pallid Harriers (*Circus Macrourus*), Long-legged Buzzards (*Buteo Rufinus*), Imperial Eagles (*Aquila Hellaca*), Lesser Spotted Eagles (*Aquila Pomarina*), Chukars (*Alectoris Chukar*), Caucasian Snowcock (*Tetraogallus Caucasicus*), Caucasian Black Grouse (*Tetrao Mlokosiewiczzi*), White Pelicans (*Pelecanus Onocrotalus*), Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelecanus Crispus*), Black Storks (*Ciconia Nigra*), Crimson-winged Finches (*Rhodopechys Sanguinea*), Radde's Accentors (*Prunella ocularis*) and a huge variety of raptors.

In Search of Rare Birds

The itineraries (as per season) to be provided upon request.





The First International Expedition of Disabled People on Mt.Kazbek (5047m).

Participants of Rally 2000 had to overcome the extensive distance from London to Beijing by the tinted cars produced at the beginning of the 20th century. The long column of cars crossed Georgia from the Turkish border to the Azerbaijan border.



Camel Trophy - *The restless adventure seekers explored the Caucasus*

In March 1998 the group of strong and brave people have tested the reliability of their vehicles, their own physical strength, their spiritual power and their friendship in many countries. Georgia's muddy and snowy off-roads to the remote villages and deserts were a new discovery.



Queen of Desert *Off Road Adventurous Expedition for Ladies Only*

In the year 2002, the organizers of the "Queen of Desert" Expedition enamored with Georgia's beautiful nature and remote areas and successfully carried out their expedition together with Caucasus Travel.



"Globe Riders" *International expedition by Motorbikes along the Great Silk Road*

From West Europe to China, avid outdoorsmen by motorbikes crossed Georgia in search of adventures. The expeditions took place in 2005 & 2007.



International Expedition by Bikes *108 km day of total bliss, exhilaration, enjoyment and fun...*

Silk route race across the entire continent of Asia, from Istanbul to Tbilisi and farther to Beijing following footsteps of Marco Polo and depending only on muscles and on the strength of mind.

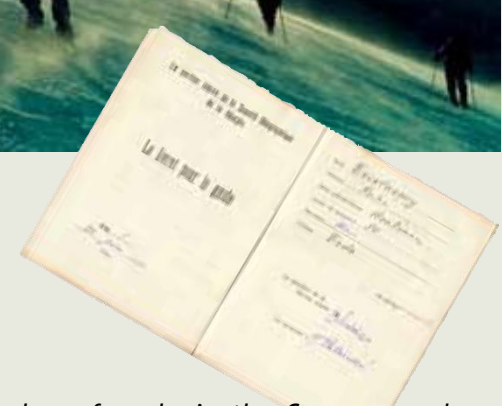
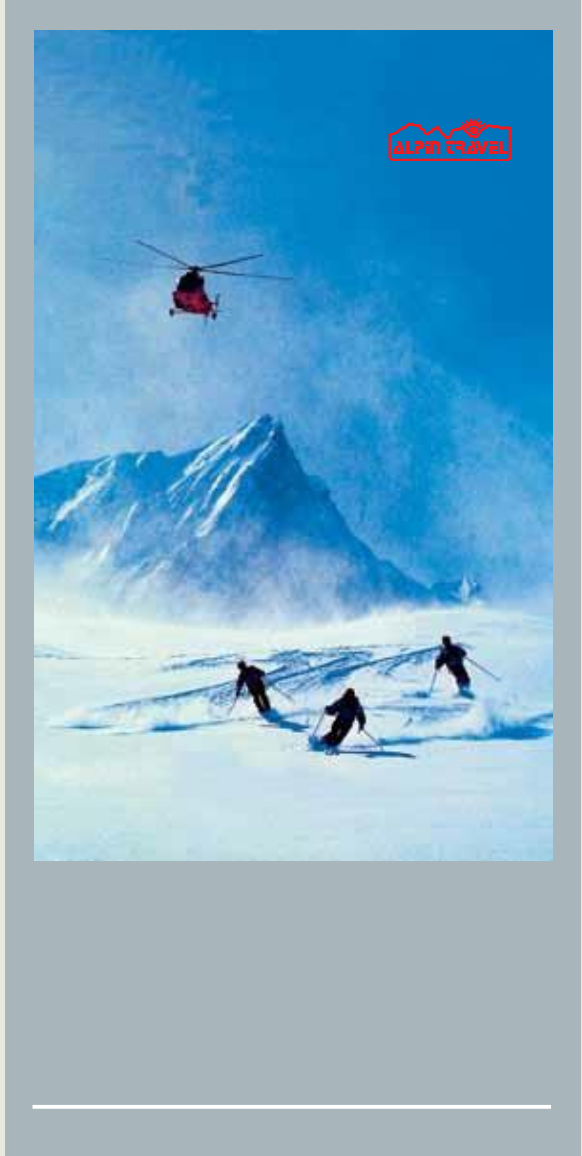


"Man & Machine" 4WD Expedition from Malaysia to Great Britain

From Kuala Lumpur to London through unforgettable open spaces and truly empty roads. 50 participants overcame challenges to explore hidden corners and savor unknown countries. Column of Toyota Land Cruisers crossed Georgia from the Azerbaijan border to the Turkish border.

British and German climbers were the first to come and conquer a number of peaks in the Caucasus and always assisted by local guides. The first Georgian mountain guides - villagers from Kazbegi, Svaneti and other mountain regions climbed many giants of the Caucasus - Mt. Elbrus, Mt. Kazbegi, Mt. Ushba and Mt. Shkara with their experienced guests. Gakha Tsiklauri, Iagor Kazalakashvili and many others are mentioned in the expeditions of Freshfield, Merzbacher, Sella, etc.

The Mountain Guide Diploma, issued by the Geographical Society of Georgia in 1925, shows that the profession of Mountain Guide was appreciated in Georgia even at the beginning of the 20th century.





Join us on the road of discovery and excitement

Imagine that you find yourself somewhere far away, surrounded by mountains that rise to the skies. Imagine there are no ski lifts, no huts, and no restaurants; no traffic signs or guidebooks with precise descriptions. Imagine you are highly unlikely to meet another traveller like yourself, but that instead you'll see thousands of sheep, and be watched closely by shepherds in felt coats known as "nabadi" surrounded by bushy Caucasian sheepdogs.

Imagine seeing medieval towers and century old houses. Imagine that along the way everybody who lives in the traditional villages, young and old meets you as friends. They watch you, shake hands with you and welcome you. They invite you to their houses to stay the night, to an improvised feast, where they treat you to delicious fresh cheese, home-made butter, bread and "arakhi" (local vodka). Is all this an adventure that makes it worth coming to Georgia? Yes or no? Don't hurry, your decision, more good things are yet to come!

We have experienced many aspects of mountain life and outdoor activities - trekking, skiing, mountaineering, rock climbing, horse-riding, mountain biking, rafting, paragliding and canyoning and other.

In this brochure we have selected only a few trips. Please feel free to contact us for further information or if you have any other suggestions.

What does "adventure" mean in Georgia?

Towers and prayer houses perched on bare cliffs, caves cut into rocks with gizzying staircases and hunters armed with deadly iron spears. The life of Georgia's mountain people and their age old history is an adventure in itself. What kind of adventure will you experience in Georgia?

Caucasus Heartland

Trek in the surroundings of the magnificent giant – Mt. Ushba (4700 m)

Rigorous trekking tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

I traverse the Caucasus

Journey through the highlands of Mtiuleti, Khevi, Khevsureti and Tusheti provinces

Trekking tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Horseback in the Caucasus Highlands

Experience horse riding along the mountain paths of Tusheti

Horse riding tour in Tusheti area (10 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Across Georgia on Mountain Bike

Venture in Caucasus highlands on mountain bike

Cycling tour (15 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Off Road Adventure in Georgia

Take up a challenge and follow off-roads of Georgia

4 WD tour (8 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

The Bride of Khevi - Mt. Kazbek

Climb Kazbek – Third highest and one of the best known peaks in the Caucasus

Mountaineering (8 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Caucasus Challenge - Mount Kazbek

2500 m of exiting descent from the plateau of the Mount Kazbek

Ski tour (8 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

The Sovereign of Svaneti

Climb up most beautiful peak of the Caucasus

Technical mountain climbing (12 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Summits of Chaukhi

Various scale of difficulty of Chaukhi Summits will meet your expectations

Mountain and Rock climbing (8 days)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Seasons: Low Good Best



ADVANCEMENT

Across Georgia on Mountain Bike

Cycling tour (15 days)



Those, fond of travelling and adventure, are welcomed to explore Georgia by mountain bike. Georgia promises to amaze not just the beginners but also experienced riders.

One of technology's greatest gifts - the mountain bike offers great scope for activity in Georgia.

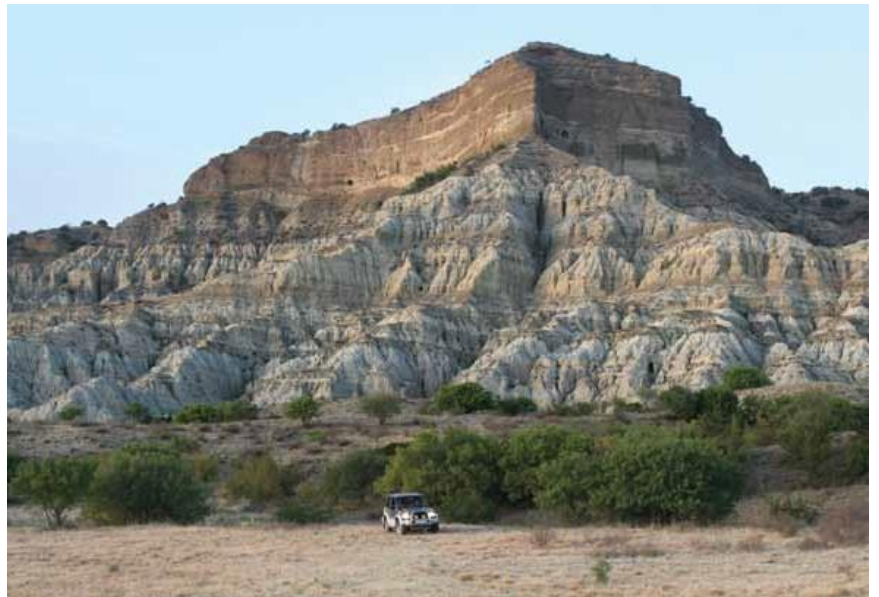
A mountain bike's size, speed, practicality and robustness allow you to start your journey in the Alpine zone, visit different picturesque parts of Georgia, mountain villages, Alpine grasslands, historical and architectural monuments and finally bask in the sun on the warm Black Sea coast.

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi** Transfer from airport to city; ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi** Mountain biking around Tbilisi; ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi - Rkoni** (1100 m) Drive to the village Partskhisi (60km, 1.5 - 2h). Cycle to the village of Rkoni (km, 1.5 h). Cycling around the reserve nature. Camp; ◆ **Day 4: Rkoni reserve - Tbilisi** Cycle across the Trialeti range (1800 m) to the village of Manglisi (1200 m, 25 km, 5-6 h). Visit the Kldekari fortress. Drive/cycle to Tbilisi (65 km); ◆ **Day 5: Tbilisi - Gudauri** (2000 m) Drive along the Georgian Military Highway to the ski resort of Gudauri (120km, 2 - 3 h). Stopovers at Shio Mgvime Monastery and Ananuri Complex. Cycling in the area; ◆ **Day 6: Gudauri - Truso gorge** Cycle across the Cross Pass (2300 m) to the village Kobi (1780 m, 22 km, 1.5 h). Cycle alongside river Tergi to the camping site in Truso Gorge (10 km, 1h). Cycle to old villages in the valley (3km). Return to the camp; ◆ **Day 7: Truso Gorge - Gudauri** Cycle / drive via snowy Gorge to the village of Juta (2200 m, 35km). Cycle to the town of Kazbegi (1700 m), centre of Khevi province (25 km, 1 h). Cycle downhill via Dariali Gorge to the Georgian-Russian border (14 km). Drive to Gudauri (50 km, 1 h); ◆ **Day 8: Gudauri - Tbilisi** Cycle via Khada Gorge to the Jinali dam (4-5 h). Drive to Tbilisi (56 km, 1.5 h); ◆ **Day 9: Tbilisi** Rest. Cultural and architectural sights; ◆ **Day 10: Tbilisi - Borjomi** (740 m) Drive to the resort of Borjomi (160 km, 4-5 h). Visit en route Mtskheta. Cycling in the Borjomi National Park area; ◆ **Day 11: Borjomi - Goderdzi pass** (2050 m) Drive to the village of Adigeni (1300 m, 92 km, 2.5 h). Cycle to the Goderdzi pass (20 km, 4-5 h). Camp; ◆ **Day 12: Goderdzi pass - Batumi** (sea level) Cycle along the Keda Gorge to the Black-Sea resort Batumi (115 km, 3-4 h); ◆ **Day 13: Batumi** Sightseeing and rest; ◆ **Day 14: Batumi - Tbilisi** Drive to Tbilisi (400 km, 5 h); ◆ **Day 15: Departure.**

Off Road Adventure in Georgia

4 WD tour (8 days)

Exciting off-road tours through the Central Caucasus mountain passes and valleys, lush forests, Borjomi canyons, steppes of Javakheti and roaring rivers of Truso gorge are never simple. Crossing challenging barriers on off-road trip is as important as the destination; it is a whole way of life... Mixing with people all along the route, seeing some of the remotest scenery, trying things that you can not even pronounce and above all sharing these adventures with your fellow traveller.



The voyage starts from Tbilisi, capital of Georgia and continues over the desert slopes and lunar landscapes of Gareja area and fertile land of Kakheti province. Off road traversing over the stunning passes of the Great and Lesser Caucasus shows extraordinary scenery of Trialety Valley. Explore the pure nature of the beautiful gorges of the Caucasus - Ksani & Aragvi and Snow capped Mount Kazbek and its surroundings. Rough roads, clean air, fascinating nature, your 4 x 4 friend and exciting adventures are waiting for you!

◆ **Day 1: Arrive in Tbilisi airport; Tbilisi - David Gareja - Signagi;** Meet with your guide and jeeps. Drive through the hills of David Gareja desert to visit rock cut monasteries and pass through amazing rock formations. Visit Signagi, surrounded by defense wall and 23 towers; enjoy views of the Alazani valley and vineyards and spend evening at nicely decorated hotel; ◆ **Day 2: Signagi - Chachuna area - Signagi;** Drive to one of the most attractive sites of the Chachuna area and visit Khornabuji castle of medieval period. On the way back taste local cheese, snacks, pickled vegetables and fresh baked bread in town of Dedoplistskharo; ◆ **Day 3: Signagi - Gremi - Akhmeta - Zhinvali - Gudauri;** Leave Signagi



and drive through picturesque valleys of Kakheti & Tianet. In the evening reach 2000 m and enjoy mountain views in alpine resort Gudauri. En route visit Gremi architectural complex. Overnight in cozy hotel with chimney & sauna; ◆ **Day 4: Gudauri - Kazbegi - Gudauri;** continue journey up and north through alpine meadows of yellow rhododendron and mountain passes littered with medieval watchtowers, reach Dariali Gorge - 15 km gash in the earth. Explore Gergety Trinity Church & Truso valley with mineral water springs, old villages & ancient fortresses; ◆ **Day 5: Gudauri - Ananuri - Dzalisi - Mtskheta - Tbilisi;** During descent glance at Ananuri - the incredible 16th century fortress built by the warring dukes of Aragvi in an attempt to control the main road. Continue trip to the untouched magical valleys where only a 4 x 4 can explore; ◆ **Day 6: Tbilisi - Akhalkalaki - Vardzia - Akhaltsikhe;** Venture further into the southwestern region of Georgia. The road to Vardzia leads past arid and stone-terraced landscapes, past the famed 10th c Khertvisi Castle. After 4-5 hours driving & passing along Paravani & Sagamo lakes explore rock cut town Vardzia, linked to Queen Tamar, royal who reigned during the 12thc & became the first woman to ascend to the throne of feudal Georgia; ◆ **Day**

7: Akhaltsikhe - Gori - Tbilisi Pass through picturesque Borjomi canyon & arrive in town of Gori. After visiting Stalin's museum, continue to Uplis-Tsikhe cave town, dating from the first half of the 1st millennium BC; ◆ **Day 8: Departure.**

Camel Trophy expedition gave rich experience and competence to our drivers, mechanics and technical staff;

Enjoy Georgia's wild and romantic countryside and take pleasure in drinking the best quality pure wine from Mildiani Family



Mildiani[®]
SELECTED GEORGIAN WINES



Selected Georgian Wines from Mildiani Family

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Culture, Nature, Adventure and more...

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E-mail: info@mildiani.ge
www.mildiani.com

Horseback in the Caucasus Highland

Horse riding tour in Tusheti area (10 days)

Life in the Caucasus Mountains is unimaginable without a horse. The Caucasian mountains are the homeland of such breeds of great endurance and beauty such as the Kabardo, Tusheti, etc.. Riding a horse through the mountain villages you immediately feel not merely a guest or a visitor but a participant in that chivalrous life that used to be led up here and traces of which are still in the air today.



For those who don't care to ride on any given day, there are numerous adventures they can participate.

Our tours are designed for a pleasure to enjoy horseback riding, beautiful views, delicious food, wine and good company. We travel with a staff whose purpose is to make your trip as carefree and enjoyable as possible. Rides are 2 to 6 hours a day. The horses are brought to us saddled and ready to go.

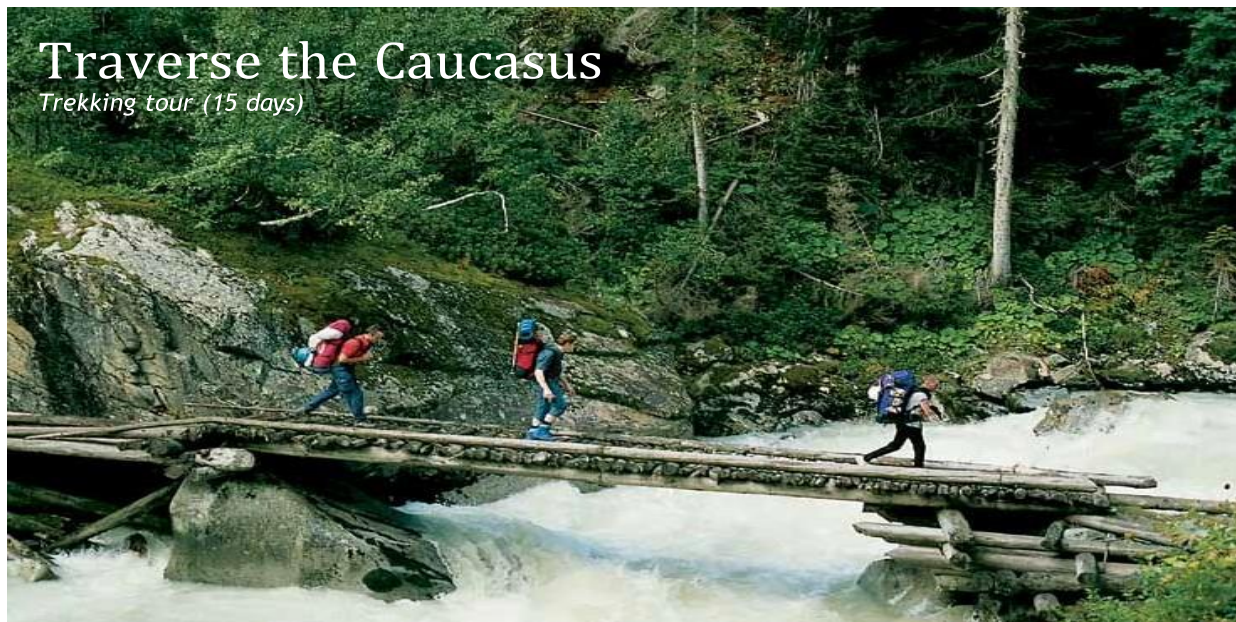
You may participate in this programme even if you are not an experienced horse-rider. Skilled instructors and guides will ensure your safety while you are riding.

A photo of you mounted on a horse wearing a Caucasian Nabadi (a woolen shepherd's coat) and a shepherd's hat with a Georgian mountain village in the background will adorn your album.

◆ **Day 1: Arrive in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Half day sightseeing tour of Tbilisi** & transfer to Kakheti area to taste delicious food and wines; ◆ **Day 3: Tusheti** After breakfast journey over the Abano Pass by 4WD vehicles towards Tusheti Valley; After refreshment hour visit to stables to become acquainted with the horses and ride 2 hours into hills; Enjoy barbeque party and accordion music around the bonfire. Dinner & overnight at the farmhouse; ◆ **Day 4: Tusheti** Today's ride proceeds into the hilly country to Omalo & Shenako (6 hours); ◆ **Day 5:** This day's ride starts out through a peaceful valley and continues on to a Diklo fortress. Fishing on trout is available in pure rivers of the Alazani River; ◆ **Day 6: Tusheti** After 4 steady hours climbing mountain paths, ride across the Sonekhi Pass and descend to Chigho village. Then through villages of Dartlo to Chesho; ◆ **Day 7:** Follow up the Pirikita Alazani River to the last populated village Girevi. Stop to visit village Parsma, then return to Chesho for overnight; ◆ **Day 8:** Ride through wooded path to upper Omalo village, then continue to Shtrolta; ◆ **Day 9:** Return to Telavi by 4WD vehicles, then on to Tbilisi. Farewell dinner at one of Tbilisi's traditional restaurant; ◆ **Day 10: Departure.**



Impressive landscapes spread around, fresh air, chattering of rivers and chirp of bird will make even a simple picnic unforgettable meal



Traverse the Caucasus

Trekking tour (15 days)

Brave day and night, Caucasian sheepdogs take care of our camps. Despite being busy enough with their duties, they don't mind relaxing in a friendly atmosphere.

Our trekking-tours are distinguished by the diversity of relief, the different cultures and the range of monuments and architecture we encounter despite the relatively short route. One also has to bear in mind that due to the intense folding of the Caucasus massif, it is hard work for trekkers in these mountains. The difference in altitude between the valleys and the passes is quite significant, so that even though linear distances covered may be quite small, trekking in Georgia is quite a serious matter.

With this program you will have the opportunity to travel from the mountainous province of Mtiuleti, through Khevi and Khevsureti to Tusheti over the passes, which used to be the main means of communication between these regions. After walking these paths, you will understand more about Georgia's development and how it has managed to preserve its great range of ethnographic diversity. Warm encounters with local inhabitants, traditional Georgian meals, Georgian history and legends await you on your journey through the mountains.

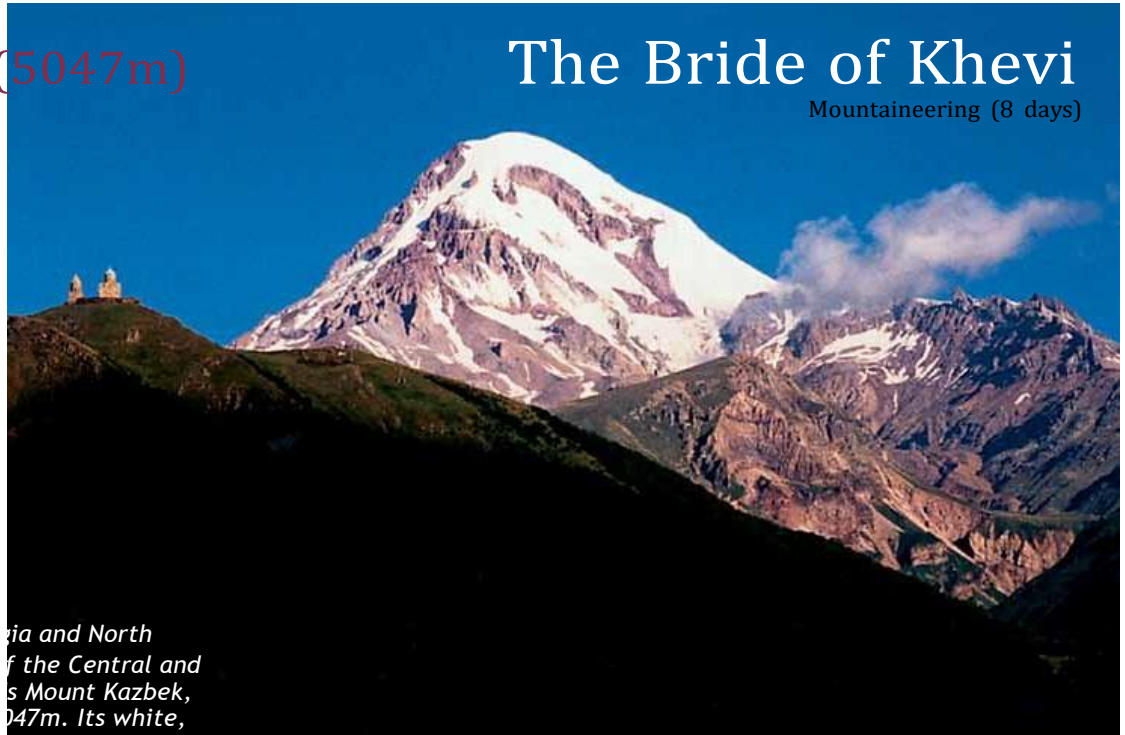
◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi**; ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi - Khada Hut** (2700m) Drive to Khada village, Mtiuleti province (alt. 1600 m. 95 km, 2.5 h). Trek through Khada gorge to the Khada Hut (alt. 2700m. 3-4h); ◆ **Day 3: Khada Hut - Kazbegi** Descent to the village of Gudauri (1.2 h). Drive to the town of Kazbegi, (45 km, 1h); ◆ **Day 4: Kazbegi - Chaukhi mountains** (2600 m) Drive to the village of Juta (25 km, 1 h). Trek to the foot of the Chaukhi mountains. Camp; ◆ **Day 5: Chaukhi mountains - Roshka village** (2500m) Trek over Roshka pass to the village (5-6 h). Camp; ◆ **Day 6: Roshka village - Shatili** (1395 m) Trek to the road (2h). Drive to Shatili village, the historical center of Khevsureti province (50 km, 2-3 h). Camp; ◆ **Day 7: Shatili - Ardoti village** (1790m) Visit Shatili towers. Drive to Mutso village (alt. 1590m, 11km). Trek to the village of Ardoti (2 h). Camp; ◆ **Day 8: Ardoti village - Atsunta pass** (2780 m) Trek to the foot of the Atsunta pass (5-6 h). Camp; ◆ **Day 9: Atsunta pass - Pirikita Alazani Gorge** (2550 m) Trek over the Atsunta pass (alt. 3431 m) to Pirikita Tusheti gorge (6-7 h). Camp; ◆ **Day 10: Pirikita Alazani Gorge - Parsma village** (1960 m) Trek along Pirikita Alazani gorge. Stopover at towers in villages (5-6 h). Camp in Parsma village; ◆ **Day 11: Parsma village - Omalo village** (2050 m) Trek to Omalo, the center of Tusheti province; ◆ **Day 12: Omalo - Telavi** Drive to the town of Telavi, the center of Kakheti province (120 km, 6h); ◆ **Day 13: Sightseeing in Telavi**; ◆ **Day 14: Telavi - Tbilisi** Drive to Tbilisi (150 km, 2,5-3h); ◆ **Day 15: Departure.**



Mt.Kazbek (5047m)

The Bride of Khevi

Mountaineering (8 days)



ia and North
f the Central and
s Mount Kazbek,
047m. Its white,

Its Georgian name is "Mkinvartsveri" meaning "ice-top" in English. (One of our guests, having stopped several times along the way to rest, said that he now understood why the Georgians call this mountain "I stop"). Stories say that Amirani, the Georgian Prometheus, defier of the gods, was the first to conquer Mkinvartsveri; a Georgian historian refers to "one loseb from Khevi" who during the reign of King Erekle II (17th century) scaled Mkinvartsveri. Officially however, the first man to conquer Kazbek was the Englishman, Douglas Freshfield, with guides from the village of Kazbegi in the end of 19th century.

Gergeti Trinity Church Perched on the top of the Holly Trinity hill at 2170 meters above sea level Gergeti Trinity Church (13-14cc) is something of a symbol of Georgia and protector of mountaineers passing along on the way to the peak Kazbek.

- ◆ Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi; ◆Day 2: Tbilisi - Kazbegi; ◆Day 3: Kazbegi - the Bethlemi Hut (Former meteorological station) Get ready for a long, hard day. The difference in altitude between Kazbegi village (1700 m) and the Bethlemi Hut (3675m) is great; ◆Day 4: The Bethlemi Hut - Peak Ortsveri (4300m, II UIAA) Today's route is a warm-up before climbing Kazbek. We will practice ice and rope techniques in order to prepare for the big climb; ◆ Day 5: The Bethlemi Hut - Peak Kazbek (5047m) Rising at 4 a.m., we will traverse the base of the mountain for one hour from the Hut and move onto the glacier. The sun rises as we reach the Maili Plateau (4500m). From the plateau we will ascend to the saddle (5000m) up a 700m, 20-25 degree slope. A 120 m, 35 degree ice slope is the last obstacle and will lead us to the summit, after a total of 5-7 hours climbing. We look down to the plains of Southern Russia and the sweep of the Caucasus range. We then reverse our route and descend to the Hut. In all, the route will take 9-10 hours; ◆Day 6: The Bethlemi Hut - Tbilisi; ◆Day 7: Tbilisi sightseeing; ◆Day 8: Departure.

Ski-Tour challenge - Mount Kazbek

Ski-Tour (8 days)

In the spring, Mt. Kazbek makes an excellent ski-touring summit for experienced skiers. Take in 2500m of mountain descent from the plateau to the valley.



- ◆ Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi ◆Day 2: Tbilisi - Kazbegi ◆Day 3: Kazbegi - Bethlemi Hut (3675 m) Ski-tour to meteo station (6-7 h). ◆Day 4: The Bethlemi Hut - Mt. Ortsveri (4360 m) Ski-tour to the north saddle of Mt. Ortsveri (1.5-2 h). Ascent to the summit via northern ridge (II UIAA. 350 m, 1 h). Descent to meteo station (1-1.5 h). ◆Day 5: The Bethlemi Hut -Mt. Kazbek (5047 m, II UIAA) Ski-tour to Mt. Kazbek north slope (4600-4800 m), Ascent to the summit via ice-snow slope (6-7 h). Descent to meteo station (2-3 h). ◆Day 6: The Bethlemi Hut - Kazbegi Descent to Kazbegi (3-4 h). ◆Day 7: Kazbegi - Tbilisi ◆ Day 8: Departure



Mountaineering and Ski-Mountaineering programmes provided by Caucasus Travel Ltd. are guided by



CAUCASUS TRAVEL
SINCE 1991



Georgia: Cradle of Wine

Vine-growing has an ancient history in Georgia. Fossilized grape leaves, stems and seeds have been unearthed from Miocene deposits in the Akhaltsikhe district of Georgia and in Bronze-age tombs. Other paleo-botanical and archaeological data attest to the long existence and wide distribution of the vine in Georgia. In some of the oldest human settlements archaeologists have unearthed wine presses cut from stone and a vast array of clay and metal wine vessels, all of which indicate that wine-making has been practised in Georgia from 2000 years BC.

Local wine-making techniques were developed in Kakheti, Imereti and Kartli. Special vessels for wine storage and maturation were designed along with implements for cleaning the wine vessels. The range of wines made was expanded over the centuries as wine makers developed sweeter, stronger wines, and new techniques for blending different wines.

Nadgora cemeteri of wine pitchers. Vessels for wine where made with particular love and respect. Even broken into pieces these almost holly objects weren't thrown away, but brought to the special place where to have been left for centuries.

Georgia has a long tradition of wine-making and vine culture. Georgians were originally sun worshippers and believed that the sun has its chosen creatures on earth. Among the animals was the lion, and among plants the vine. The vine was thought to be brimming with solar energy, its growth reflecting the power of the sun. The vine represented the feminine spirit, and the sun, the masculine. This is why wine has strength, reflecting the power given to it by the sun. Georgians even call the vine the sun's daughter. St. Nino, who brought Christianity to Georgia, made a cross from vine stems and tied them together with her hair, symbolising the sun's rays. The winding characters of the Georgian alphabet reflect the trailing growth of the vine; it is found as a decorative motif in Georgian architecture and as an ornamental device it is interwoven with capital letters in old Georgian manuscripts.



Harvest time

"Rtveli" is the time of grape harvesting in Georgia. During rtveli, all able-bodied people in the region spend their days in the vineyards. Only grandmothers and their grandchildren are left behind to cook food, including "churchkhela", a favourite sweet for adults and children alike. Usually, all churchkheles are consumed within one year as each new rtveli brings a fresh churchkhela harvest, and a new occasion for celebration.



Making "Churchkhela"



The breathtaking Georgian Folk Dances represent a live history book expressing the centuries of Georgian art, culture and tradition. Each dance portrays life of the region in which it originated, and thus is diverse and unique. The mountain dances, such as Khevsuruli, Kazbeguri, or Mtiuluri, are sharply different from some valley dances – Ajaruli and Davluri. The beautiful costumes, rhythm of movement, sound of traditional musical instruments are blend in one single harmony. Don't miss Georgian National Ballet Sukhishvilebi, Erisioni, Rustavi and others.



We invite you for dinner at a 'marani' - a special storehouse for harvested grapes and for making wine. Wine is pressed in a "satsnakheli", a huge wooden vat, in which the family crushes the grapes

A Selection of Georgian Cuisine

Georgian cuisine offers an abundance of elaborate dishes with all possible kinds of meat, fish, vegetables with garlic, walnuts and various herbs and spices; different sorts of cheeses; all kinds of pickles and pungent spices - all of which are very fresh natural products.

Khachapuri – bread with cheese filling, described by foreigners as "Georgian pizza". Each part of Georgia has its own unique khachapuri with its own special flavor, composition and shape. In most regions of west Georgia guests are treated to hot khachapuri.



Chakhokhbili – the original chakhokhbili was prepared with "Khokhobi" (Pheasant) and was a popular festive dish with the nobility in all of Georgia. At present it is difficult to find a restaurant where you can order the original chakhokhbili, but chicken with these spices tastes almost as good.



Satsivi – it takes a long time to prepare satsivi – a traditional dish for the New Year feast. It is turkey or chicken with a lot of oriental and local spices and walnuts. The procedure of preparing satsivi is accompanied by a fun and festive mood. You are supposed to have a lucky and successful year if satsivi is on the New Year table.



Khinkali – the delicious food of the people in the east and north mountainous regions. It is a boiled dumpling filled with minced meat in dough. In the mountain regions people mix in special spices. All sacrificial rituals are finalized by preparing khinkali. During the feast hosts serve trays of hot khinkali for the guests.



Churchkhela – a yummy and wholesome delicacy of nuts or raisins threaded onto a string. The string is then dipped repeatedly in simmering grape juice and wheat flour and then hung out on ropes to dry. churchkhela from Kakheti is the best.



Entertainment, Pleasure & Leisure



While being in Georgia find pleasure in visiting numerous theatres, attend folk shows and performances, visit galleries and be emerged in night-life of Tbilisi and Batumi.

... And don't forget about Georgian wine and food

Georgian Supra is an essential part of Georgian life style. It doesn't matter are you in mountains or lowlands, in large cities or remote villages, the flavour of local dishes will lead you through the different regions of Georgia and offer the possibility to feel the whole taste of unmistakably distinctive and forgettable Georgian cuisine and enjoy the variety and abundance of Georgian wines.

Georgians display passion in both, the preparation and consumption of a meal. Maybe that's why Russian poet A. Pushkin commented, that every Georgian dish is a poem.

But still, Georgian "Supra" won't be completed without the head of the table or toastmaster "Tamada" He is elected and proposed by the host. The "Tamada" must be a man of humor with ability for improvisation and a philosopher's wisdom. "Merikhipi" will make sure that wine glasses are filled at all times. End the dinner party will go on...

The real dinner party will be accompanied by the thousand years old traditional polyphonic songs and Georgian fiery dances. You aren't supposed to be professional dancer; burning rhythms of tam-tams and Georgian wine will fill you with joy and make you be involved in "perkhuly dance".

The Wine Route

Tour in "Tamada's" – Toastmaster's country

Wine tour (8 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

The rout of Flavours

The land of elaborated cuisine and great variety of exquisite wines

Gourmet tour (8 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Fun and Joy at Black Sea Coast

Blue-green waters of Black Sea, hot sun and fun

Sea leisure holidays											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Healthy & Beauty

Spa, fresh air, beautiful nature make your holidays unforgettable

Spa leisure holidays on Georgian Resorts											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Caucasus Ski Paradise

Enjoy deep, soft and fresh snow, variety of slopes, ideal valley and alpine hills

Ski holidays in Gudauri and Bakuriani (8 days)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Seasons: Low Good Best

Detailed information on the programmes and our additional Travel Manual are available upon request

The Wine Rout

Wine tour (8 days)



Enjoy special wine from special ceramic vessel- Kvevri (wine pitcher)

The wine route leads us to Kakheti - the main wine producing province of Georgia. This program aims to give you an eight day Georgian wine tasting experience and to introduce you to the traditions, history and the attitude of Georgians to the wine they produce.

Visit motherland of wine with abundance of endemic species. Meet local wine producers and learn about archaic wine making skills first mentioned in pre-Christian Greek and Roman historical annals. Local wine-makers will share their experience in wine nursing. Have a look at "Marani" - a special house for making wine and visit churches lavishly decorated with vine tree ornaments.

The reach land, burning sun and hard work have developed about 500 varieties of vine in Georgia. The history, culture and lifestyle of Georgians are embodied in Georgian wine. The Wine tour gives an opportunity to experience such a life stile.

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing tour** including visit of winery, wine tasting and wine shops; ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi – Signagi – Telavi** drive to the wine producing region of Kakheti; Explore Signagi Royal Town, famous for its wine cellars and today town where wine festivals take place; ◆ **Day 4: Telavi and surroundings**, Explore Nadgora- cemetery of wine pitchers, visit Tsinandali Family Estate and wine cellar, vineyards, hundred years old family wine cellars and the leading wine producers; ◆ **Day 5: Telavi -David Gareja – Tbilisi** on the way to Tbilisi visit David Gareja Monastery Complex, its refectory and winecellar located on the very top of hill in arid area of Semi Desert; ◆ **Day 6: Tbilisi – Mtskheta – Ananuri-** Tbilisi Trip to Mskheta, visit local cognac production; ◆ **Day 7: Tbilisi – Gori – Tbilisi** drive across the fertile land of Kartli province to explore

There is no meal without wine and accordingly no wine without TAMADA toast- master...

...only singers have the "right" to ignore the Tamada's rules.

So if you are chosen by tamada for "alaverdi" (means passing the rights to make the next toast) don't miss this opportunity... make your best for toasting and enjoy the wine, like this gentleman is surprisingly to do

Uplistsikhe cave town (1st Millennium BC) and visit its ancient wine presses carved in stone; ◆ **Day 8 Departure.**

The bouquet of wine, the toasts of the Tamada, the beautiful Georgian songs, the romantic atmosphere and as we say in Georgia - "Bread, cheese and a kind heart". ..What else do we need?

The duration of this program is 8 days, but it can be reduced or extended according to your wishes and possibly. ... your ability to drink.

Georgian bread "Dedas Puri" is so tasty, that it's hard to say is it just an addition to the main dishes or itself most important thing on table and all the rest just underlines its rich taste.

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lavours leads through the different regions of Georgia offering the opportunity to savor the wide-ranging and unmistakably distinctive tastes of the unforgettable Georgian Cuisine.

◆ **Day 1: Arrival in Tbilisi;** ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi - Mtskheta - Kutaisi** Lunch in Mtskheta, dinner in a local guesthouse with traditional Imereti dishes; ◆ **Day 3: Kutaisi - Mestia;** Lunch en route, dinner in guesthouse in Mestia - first meeting with Svaneti's local cuisine; ◆ **Day 4: Mestia** You will see how Georgian cheese is prepared, we can take part in cooking; ◆ **Day 5: Mestia - Zugdidi - Batumi** Lunch in Zugdidi with Samegrelo spicy dishes. Visit the tea and citrus plantations in local villages. Dinner in a local home in Ajara; ◆ **Day 6: Batumi- Tbilisi** Ajaruli khatchapuri and local cakes well be served for breakfast. Lunch en route. Dinner in a restaurant of Tbilisi with a variety of Caucasian dishes; ◆ **Day 7: Tbilisi** Early breakfast with khashi and vodka. Lunch and dinner in one of the city's famous restaurants; ◆ **Day 8: Departure.**



The Route of Flavours

Gourmet - 8 days)

Mtskheta, we'll enjoy Georgian dumplings called *khinkali* and a creamy soup of red beans - *lobio* - served in a clay pot.

Imereti with its cool springs, green fields, and delicate, manicured gardens will offer a special kind of "khachapuri", the cheese-bread unique to Georgia. In this part of Georgia, food and a traditional Georgian table have a superior importance. A great variety of dishes will be served with Imeret's hospitality. The next cuisine tasted is in *Svaneti*. For centuries the Svan ethnic group evolved there, cut off from the outside world by the high and inaccessible mountains, their culture preserved almost intact. Here are reserved some of the oldest and most unique examples of traditional Georgian recipes: Breads with different fillings, blood sausages, and numerous dishes with fresh meat. In *Mestia* we can watch the cheese making process and take part in cooking traditional dishes.

Samegrelo, with its own strong identity and hot, humid climate is famous for its cuisine. Lot of chili pepper makes megrel's dishes spicier than elsewhere in Georgia. Here you will be offered maize porridge - *gomi* with *sulguni* cheese, and other dishes of meat and vegetables with nuts.

Ajara, situated at the Black Sea coast with a subtropical climate, exotic plants and all shades of green will open the doors of its rich kitchen. Delicious cakes with nuts, navel shaped "khachapuri", "achma" and other dishes will be served.

The end of trip will be spent in *Tbilisi*, starting the day with "khashi", a broth cooked from beef and lavishly seasoned with garlic. This strange breakfast is usually eaten very early morning to cure a hangover and usually is accompanied by 100 grams of vodka.

The remainder of the day we will spend in *Tbilisi*. Here you will find the restaurants serving the cuisine of every region of Georgia.

During the tour we will admire dishes of the region of **Kartli** - the heart of Georgia, rich with vegetables and fruits. In the old capital of Georgia,



Preparing Khinkali is not an easy job ...



...eating neither

CAUCASUS TRAVEL
SINCE 1991

Caucasus Ski Paradise

Ski tour (14 days)



If you love snow, high peaks and skiing, vacation in Georgia is what you are looking for. Here everyone, professional skier or amateur will find something on his liking. Magic winter colours and unspoiled landscapes, wrapped in a white mantle of snow, create a special atmosphere for a holiday to remember. You will experience winter fantasy which will long remain vivid in your memory.



Extended natural snow skiing season, variety of slopes, deep, soft and fresh snow makes Georgia one of the best destination for ski tours. Gudauri- is an ideal skiing and snowboarding area for beginners and ski experts; Bakuriani offers fluffy snow for off-piste amateurs, steep dazzling slopes for downhill fans, ideal sunny valleys for cross country tours and alpine hills for ski-tourers. Skiing in Svaneti is an adventure itself. Here you are in the heart of the mountains, and the feeling of skiing in a shadow of two peaked mount Ushba is truly indescribable.

Gudauri Ski Resort is located along Georgian Military Highway within two hours drive from Tbilisi. . With great views and plenty of sun & snow, Gudauri's gentle slopes are ideal for beginners and intermediate skiers. Gudauri provides a wide range of choice for off-piste skiing. The three-and-four seated chair lifts get skiers to the top (3006m)

Bakuriani Ski Resort is the place for year-round fun and adventure. Bakuriani offers fluffy snow for off-piste amateurs, steep dazzling slopes for downhill fans, sunny valleys for cross country tours. Bakuriani is a favorite destination for everyone in the family alike-young, old & the children. Especially for those who are experiencing snow for the first time, Bakuriani welcomes them with sparkling snow, crisp invigorating air and multiple ski-tracks. Natural conditions here are ideal for active recreation and winter vacation.

Mestia is located in the remote Svaneti Area cut off from the outside world by the high and inaccessible mountains. Three ski routs have been built in Svaneti complying with the highest international standards. Beautiful landscapers, impressive views of Mt Ushba (4710 metres), the snow pyramid of Mt Tetnuldli (4974 metres), the beginnings of Georgia's highest mountain, Mt Shkhara (5068 metres), with Mt Elbruz, Europe's highest mountain (5642 metres) lurking just behind Ushba... And several ski touring routs passing from one remote village to another offering opportunity to experience local hospitality and enjoy unique tower architecture of Svaneti.

◆ **Day 1:** Arrival in Georgia; ◆ **Day 2:** Tbilisi Sightseeing tour- Drive to Gudauri via Mtsketa (UNESCO site), former Capital of Georgia; Overnight in Gudauri; ◆ **Day 3:** Leisure day for Skiing in Gudauri; ◆ **Day 4:** Leisure day for Skiing in Gudauri; ◆ **Day 5:** Leisure day for Skiing in Gudauri; ◆ **Day 6:** Gudauri –Bakuriani with optional visits to Ananuri Architecture Complex and Uplistsikhe Cave town; Overnight in Bakuriani; ◆ **Day 7:** Leisure day for Skiing in Bakuriani; ◆ **Day 8:** Leisure day for Skiing in Bakuriani; ◆ **Day 9:** Drive to Mestia, with optional visits to Gelati Accademi Copmlex (UNESCO site) and Bagrati Cathedral (UNESCO site); Overnight in Mestia; ◆ **Day 10:** Leisure day for Skiing in Mestia; ◆ **Day 11:** Leisure day for Skiing in Mestia; ◆ **Day 12:** Leisure day for Skiing in Mestia; ◆ **Day 13:** Mestia – Tbilisi;

Winter Holidays in Georgia

Vacation Tour (8 days)

Spend your winter holidays in Georgia, experience skiing in the shadow of high peaks of the Caucasus Mountain Range of Svaneti remote area, rest and relax at Tskaltubo Spa resort and enjoy subtropical views of Adjara region and the Black Sea shore.



Here soft snow, beauty of pristine nature, spa treatment, warm offshore breeze of the Black Sea, rich Georgian cuisine as well as traditional Georgian hospitality is expecting you. We will drive up the Enguri canyon where the Svan ethnic group evolved, cut off from the outside world by the high and inaccessible mountains, their culture preserved almost intact with the ritual of worshipping spirits and the fertility cults. Unspoiled nature, original architecture, ancient customs and artisan ship combine to impress the visitor with the wealth of Svaneti culture.



This province of Georgia has remained largely unaffected by the pace of modern civilization. Along the program visit cultural and religious sites, explore Tbilisi - the city of contrasts, ramble through the Old Town, peer into tiny courtyards and admire the eclectic mix of orthodox churches, mosques and synagogues.

◆ **Day 1: Arrive in Tbilisi** / overnight Tbilisi; ◆ **Day 2: Tbilisi sightseeing tour** / overnight Tbilisi; ◆ **Day 3: Tbilisi – Tskaltubo spa resort** / overnight Tskaltubo; ◆ **Day 4: Tskaltubo – Mestia** / overnight Mestia; ◆ **Day 5: Full day for skiing** / overnight Mestia; ◆ **Day 6: Mestia – Batumi** / overnight Batumi; ◆ **Day 7: Batumi sightseeing tour** / overnight Batumi; ◆ **Day 8: Batumi – Tbilisi** / overnight Tbilisi; ◆ **Day 9: Departure**



Highlights:

Old and New Tbilisi; the town of Mtskheta (UNESCO site); Gelati and Bagrati Monasteries (UNESCO sites); Sataplia caves; churches and towers of medieval ages of Svaneti; fascinating nature and the highest mountains of Georgia; the Black Sea shore and the town of Batumi; delicious food and wine.





Due to its geographical characteristics, Georgia is a treasure trove of hot and mineral springs. Tbilisi –the Capital has also been famous for its warm sulphur baths for millennia. Indeed the city created itself around these relaxing pools of water located under the Narikala fortress of the old town. Tbilisi bathhouses and spa centers are ready to welcome the visitor either for relaxation or various health treatments with mud and minerals.

Rich in spa resorts, Georgia is a paradise for those who wish to relax, refresh and recreate. Visiting a spa resort can help you to improve your health, bring your entire being into balance and also admire beautiful landscapes, intact nature, fresh air and nearest cultural sites.

BORJOMI spa resort is situated at 810-850m above the sea level and is surrounded by verdant nature and lush pine forests. Resort is famous for its celebrated mineral waters. The natural high purity and healthy chemical components of Borjomi water make it not only pleasant to drink but also a perfect preventive and curative means against a number of diseases. The Borjomi water is rich in the most vital microelements for a human organism. The water's curative effects had been well known to the people since ancient times. Nowadays Borjomi Mineral Water is world-famous as one of the best medicinal and table waters which gained a number of gold medals and diplomas in different international exhibitions.

TSKHALTUBO: If there is some real and fantastic spring of immortality-then it is in Tskhaltubo, coming from the heart of the earth. The radon carbonate water of Tskhaltubo has become symbol of healthy life for a long time. The resort is focused on balneo- therapy for circulatory, nervous, muscular-skeletal, gynecological and skin diseases. The nearby hills of the resort are overgrown with rich subtropical vegetation, evergreen bushes and leaf-bearing woods (oak, beech, hornbeam).

SAIRME: The word 'Sairme' means 'a place of deers'. As per legend, deers and wild goats used to come from nearby forests to the resort. They used to assemble near mineral water sources. Hence, hunters named the place Sairme. It attracts guests due to the distinguished medical properties of its mineral and thermal waters and curative action against diseases of kidney and urinary tracts; treatment is also provided for patients suffering from diseases of liver and biliary tracts, gastro enteric tract and metabolism.

Ureki. Ureki famous for its unique and amazing sandy beaches contain a large amount of magnetite particles. The beneficial health properties of magnetic energy have been known since ancient times and were used by Egyptians, Greeks and Indian Yogis for treatment of different diseases. Magnetic energy has anti-inflammatory and painkilling properties; it stimulates the regeneration of tissues, strengthens the immune system, and improves conditions from several diseases.

◆ Day 1. Arrival in Tbilisi; ◆ Day 2. Tbilisi Sightseeing tour/ Sulfur bath houses; ◆ Day 3. Tbilisi -Borjomi/ overnight in Borjomi; ◆ Day 4. Borjomi/ walking in Borjomi Mineral Park; ◆ Day 5. Borjomi / optional visit to Rabati and Vardzia Cave town; ◆ Day 6. Borjomi -Tskhaltubo; ◆ Day 7. Tskhaltubo / Kutaisi Sightseeing tour; ◆ Day 8. Tskaltubo / Optional visit to speleological caves; ◆ Day 9. Tskaltubo - Sairme / overnight in Sairme; ◆ Day 10. Sairme/ Leisure day for stroll and walking; ◆ Day 11. Sairme / Leisure day; ◆ Day 12. Sairme - Batumi (or Ureki); ◆ Day 13. Leisure day on the Black Sea Shore; ◆ Day 14. Leisure day on the Black Sea Shore/ Batumi Sightseeing tour; ◆ Day 15. Departure

Beautiful and unique with its narrow streets, mixture of old and new Batumi is immersed in subtropical vegetation and is overlooked by green hills and the distant white peaks of the Caucasus Mountains. Batumi is rapidly increasing modern city with a great variety of newly built hotels, seaside cafés, restaurants, bars and pubs. Many local and international cultural events make Batumi a great place for business and leisure.



Enjoy leisure holidays along the pristine Black Sea coast. Nothing is better in hot summer than fascinating sounds of waves, mixture of mountains and sea air, sub-tropical landscapes of the “Green Cape”, beautiful views of citrus and tea plantations, rocky cliffs of Tsikhidsiry, Batumi boulevard and variety of restaurants, cafes and bars and night clubs along the seaside.

◆ **Day:1 Arrival in Batumi;** ◆ **Day 2: Batumi Sightseeing tour;** ◆ **Day 3: Leisure day/** optional day trip to upper Adjara; ◆ **Day 4: Leisure day/** optional adventure in Mtirala National Park' ◆ **Day 5: Leisure day/** optional trip to Kutaisi to visit its UNESCO sites; ◆ **Day 6: Leisure day/** optional trip to the wetlands of Kolchis; ◆ **Day 7: Leisure day/** Botanical Garden and Batumi Dolphinarium; ◆ **Day 8: Departure**

While you're in Batumi don't forget to taste fresh melted coffee and traditional nave shaped “Khachapuri”.

Be guest of local pubs and bars; enjoy sea disco's and attend open air concerts.

Visit plantations of citrus and tea.

Don't miss to visit Adjara wine house and taste georgian wines;

Be hosted by local family in a remote village and spend the whole day in farm; enjoy village life and taste organic food.



Batumi dolphinarium attracts guest of all generations by presenting the new interactive show with dancing dolphins, playing with rings and balls, balancing on the tails, unforgettable Foot Push and many other new and old stunning moments. Here you have the opportunity to swim with dolphins and be filled by positive emotions of these friendly creatures.

Cultural sites to visit in Batumi:

Batumi Fine Arts Gallery; Adjara History Museum; Nobel's museum; Gonio Fortress; Batumi Botanical Garden; St. Mary Cathedral; Tamar's bridge; Batumi Old town with Sea Side Park, Saint Barbara Church, Piazza Square, Batumi Sea port, Catholic Church, the Mosque, streets of Old Batumi, decorated with chimeras, lions, nameless mythical creatures; Square of Europe; The Statue of Ali and Nino.



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Culture, Nature, Adventure and more...

Dear Friends,

We have almost two decades of outstanding experience in providing travel services. For us, customer satisfaction is the true measure of success. We have endured many challenges, overcame them and succeeded. The company has expanded over the years and we are competent to meet your expectations. Please don't hesitate to contact us for leisure and other tourist product, which we are glad to provide with full commitment and powerful supply.



Family Holidays

Enjoy leisure holidays in Georgia

We invite you and your family to join us to discover Georgia, enjoy beautiful landscapes, intact nature, fresh mountain air and pleasant beaches of Black Sea. Have a fun in National Parks and Speleo Caves; follow unbeaten path in remote areas, enjoy local hospitality, visit amusement parks and Aqua parks.



Rural Tour

Responsible Tourism

Travel from region to region, from one remote village to another; Enjoy pristine nature and a great variety of landscapes from the peaks of Caucasus highlands, to fertile lands and wine making areas, subtropics, wetlands and alpine meadows... Visit farms upholding centuries-old traditions; meet local population, taste organic home-made dishes and support locals by staying at farm houses and taking part in everyday village life.



Cultural Events

Travel service and logistic support

The possibilities of cultural events in Georgia are unlimited. The thousand years old history, cultural and architectural sites inspire such events as "village corners", "Toast competitions", performances, folk shows and Champaign parties in remote areas or fashionable interiors. Recreation and giving new life to the abandoned villages and forgotten festivals.



Corporate Events & Incentives

Team building and Outdoor Activities

Our Corporate events always set at a nice spot offer variety of activities and adventure. They are mostly focused on team building elements. The exact format of team games, special activities and entertainment are defined individually after studying the tasks and goals of the company.



Get away tours

Day Trips ; 2,3,4 or 5 days trips available from Tbilisi

Lucky enough to be in Georgia on a business trip or by yourself? But don't let noisy city fill all your time here. If you want to be more active and get away – for a short break, a weekend, or even just a day trip, Caucasus Travel is here to assist you. We offer regular and tailored programs to some of the most beautiful places in Georgia.





Off shore tours

Tours for Cruise passengers

We provide inland services and guided shore excursions to cruise ships from the ports of Batumi and Poti. In very limited frames of time we are confident to offer the best of Georgia: important and valuable cultural sights including churches, monasteries and museums, specially organized concert - entertainment, exquisite food and wines.



Sport Events

Logistics and technical Support

We have years of experience in assistance of international sport Events – Football, Rugby matches and other competitions by providing technical assistance, hotel reservations, logistics, transportation and etc.



Rally's and Caravans

Travel service and logistic support

We have years of experience in organizing Rally & Caravans.

Among them was **Classic Car Endurance Rally 2006** "Amsterdam to Beijing" Along the Great Silk Road. 200 hundred participants of Rally by classic cars covered 17.500 kilometers from Amsterdam to Beijing in summer 2006. They passed 14 countries among them Georgia and crossed 2 continents to see all the exotic places of Alexander the Great's famous Silk Route.



Filming & TV assistance

Logistics, technical and thematic assistance for filming

We have experience of working with BBC Travel Show, Discovery Channel, Lonely Planet, NHK Japan and several other TV and film studios and productions. Thousand years old history, beautiful landscapes, unique culture and lifestyle make Georgia attractive for filming.



Once you are in Tbilisi, please feel free to drop by our Downtown office where our FIT service department will provide all travel services and free consultancy regarding your holiday in Georgia.

We can supply you with appropriate transport, the most experienced guides, interpreters, as well we will book your hotel for the best available rate and reserve a table free-of-charge in the restaurant of your choice.

Thanks to our reliable network of experienced partners we offer high quality services in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Our office, located in downtown Tbilisi, always welcomes guests, partners and friends.

▼ here we are

ORTACHALA



Ajara is an autonomous republic in the south-west part of the country. It has been inhabited since New Stone Age. There are two main climatic zones in Ajara - foreland with sub-tropical zone and the mountainous zone. Almost 60% of the region's territory is located at the altitude of more than 1000 m above the sea level. Coastal climate and soils are favorable for tea and citrus growth.

Abkhazeti Autonomous Republic is situated in the north-western part of Georgia, along the Greater Caucasus Mountain Range. Because of a long and picturesque Sea Side, beautiful health-resort, fresh air and pristine nature it was the main tourist destination during the Soviet times. Today it is part of Georgia, but is under control of separatist regime.

Distance between South Caucasus Cities (in KM)							\$30 Off A Weekly Rental		
TBILISI - BAKU <i>Via Lagodekhi</i>	631	TBILISI - BAKU <i>Via Red Bridge</i>	544	TBILISI - Sadakhlo <i>Via Sadakhlo</i>	289	TBILISI - YEREVAN 247 <i>Via Guguti</i>	TBILISI - YEREVAN 492 <i>Via Bavra</i>	Show this insert to Hertz Georgia and get \$30 off a weekly rental in Georgia	
Tbilisi - Lagodekhi	188	Tbilisi - Kazakh	88	Tbilisi - Sadakhlo	63	Tbilisi - Bolnisi	53	Tbilisi - Borjomi	157
Lagodekhi - Sheki	130	Kazakh - Gyanja	112	Sadakhlo - Dilijan	127	Bolnisi - Guguti	42	Borjomi - Bavra	166
Sheki - Shemakhi	183	Gyanja - Yevlakh	65	Dilijan - Sevan	46	Guguti - Spitak	61	Bavra - Gyumri	55
Shemakhi - Baku	130	Yevlakh - Baku	279	Sevan - Yerevan	53	Spitak - Yerevan	91	Gyumri - Yerevan	114

Self-Drive
 Chauffeur Drive Service
 Transfers to Caucasus Cities
 Optional Services



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