

# Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia Tour in 26 days

## Key information

Duration: 26 days / 25 nights

Best season: July - September

Tour type: small group/individual

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## What's included:

Airport and border transfers, Accommodation for 25 nights at 3\* hotels (double rooms, free Wi-Fi), Breakfast, All transfers in air-conditioned vehicles, English speaking guide service for all days, All admission fees, 1 bottle (0,5 litre) of water per day per person, Tatev cable car ticket, Wine tasting, Masterclass of Georgian bread and churchkhela making

## What's not included:

Flights, Medical insurance, Visa fee

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## Itinerary in Brief

- Day 1 - Arrival in Baku (Azerbaijan)
- Day 2 - Baku City Tour
- Day 3 - Mardakan
- Day 4 - Gobustan - Absheron - Baku
- Day 5 - Baku - Shamakhi - Gabala
- Day 6 - Gabala - Sheki
- Day 7 - Sheki - Lagodekhi border - Nekresi - Khareba - Telavi
- Day 8 - Telavi - Tsinandali - Sighnaghi - Tbilisi
- Day 9 - Tbilisi City Tour - Mtskheta - Tbilisi
- Day 10 - Tbilisi - Ananuri - Gudauri - Gergeti - Tbilisi
- Day 11 - Tbilisi - Gori - Kutaisi - Gelati - Bagrati - Kutaisi
- Day 12 - Kutaisi - Colchis - Svaneti - Mestia
- Day 13 - Mestia - Ushguli - Lamaria - Zhibiani - Mestia
- Day 14 - Mestia - Martvili - Prometheus Cave - Kutaisi
- Day 15 - Kutaisi - Uplistsikhe - Tbilisi
- Day 16 - Sadakhlo border - Haghartsin - Goshavank - Dilijan
- Day 17 - Sevanvank - Selim Pass - Jermuk
- Day 18 - Karahunj - Tatev - Khndzoresk - Goris
- Day 19 - Goris - Areni - Noravank - Khor Virap - Yerevan
- Day 20 - Yerevan City Tour
- Day 21 - Garni - Geghard - Yerevan
- Day 22 - Gyumri City Tour
- Day 23 - Harichavank - Saghmosavank - Amberd - Yerevan
- Day 24 - Echmiadzin - Zvartnots - Yerevan
- Day 25 - Free Day
- Day 26 - Departure



## Detailed itinerary

### Day 1

Meeting at the airport of Baku, transfer to the hotel.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Baku

### Day 2

In the morning you will have a city tour in Baku. The route covers the downtown and shows the most interesting historical and architectural sights. The tourists will visit and see the Flag Square, a new Carpet Museum - design of the building is distinguished by its originality as the museum is built in the form of a folded carpet, enjoy the look of the House of Government, the Philharmonic Theatre named after M. Magomayev, the Baku Mayor's office and will visit the "Governor's garden." Then the tour will continue visiting the "old city" that had preserved and walls and narrow cobbled streets till our days... A number of the Soviet-time movies were shot here. Tourists will see the main attractions of the Old City, including the Palace of the Shirvan Shahs (XV cent), the symbol of the city - Maiden Tower (IX cent), Karvansarays, mosques etc. We will continue our excursion visiting Cultural Center named after Heydar Aliyev. Heydar Aliyev Center is a cultural centre, projected as a complex structure that includes the auditorium (convention centre), a museum, exhibition halls, administrative offices. The design of the building is also notable for the fact that neither in the interior or exterior of the building has any angles.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Baku

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 5-6 hours

**Length:** 60 km

### Day 3

In the morning you will Drive to Mardakan. Mardakan is an urban village, located 34 kilometres from Baku, and has an ancient and rich history. The first stop of the tourists will be in the sanctuary - the tomb of Pir Hasan, a shrine for many believers. Pir Hasan is a mausoleum, that was created in the XVI century. There is the mausoleum of the seventh daughter of Imam Musa al-Kyazimi Hazrati Khadija buried on this place and the mausoleum of Pir Hasan in the courtyard of the sanctuary. Also, the famous Azerbaijani Philanthropist Haji Zeynalabdin Tagiyev and his daughter Sarah Khanum are buried here. It is an interesting fact, that this place is known among Azerbaijanis as a place of the rescue of fright neurosis, which is cured by the old childag method (treatment with hot coals). There is a famous Mardakan fortress, a quadrangular castle (Mardakan) located in the village. The fortress was built in honour of the brilliant victory of Akhsitan over the enemy. In the last part of the excursion, the tourists will also see another sight - the former summer residence of the oil millionaire of the end of XIX – the beginning of XX centuries - Murtuza Mukhtarov. Visit of the Mir Movsum Agha Shuvalan Mosque Mir Movsum Agha is considered to be a holy man who was believed to have no bones. People claim that witnessed a range of miracles this holy man presented. The mosque is also a place to sacrifice meat and other goods, those are distributed to poor families in the village. Return to Baku.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Baku

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 90 km

### Day 4

Tour to Gobustan historical-art reserve perfectly preserved rock paintings (petroglyphs) a kind of artistic "archive" of human evolution on Earth. "Documents" of such archive is the first human's presentation to the world. Gobustan Rocks are the



brightest witnesses of the prehistoric period of human existence and reflect the history of this region for nearly 15,000 years – since the end of the Upper Paleolithic era till middle Ages, this phenomenon set up a lot of different interpretations. Today scientists found and studied more than 4,000 petroglyphs. Visit the interactive museum, wherewith the help of special programs and multimedia touch screens you'll get information about the nature and the flora of Gobustan. Then you will have the opportunity to explore the traces of active mud volcanoes. We proceed to Absheron, one of the few places on earth, one can observe elements of preserved fire cult of the ancient Zoroastrianism religion, places where oil oozes and gas breaks out from the earth like flaming torches "Burning earth" since ancient times, has always attracted fire worshipers from around the world. The official religion of the ancient in the VII century BC; Zoroastrianism spread in Azerbaijan was due to spontaneously flammable sources. Therefore, the monument temple Ateshgah (Fire House) has survived. Next, we visit the small village Mehemmedli situated in the Mount Yanardagh in Azeri "Yanar" means "burning", "Dagh" means "mountain", the real burning mountain. Once in Absheron lot of places with natural gas coming out from earth to the surface ignited spontaneously, at present, it is the only place of this unique natural phenomenon.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Baku

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 150 km

## Day 5

Breakfast and Check out, drive to the north-west of Azerbaijan through the Caucasus Mountains, the dry landscape around Baku replaced by dense forest mountains. On route visit the city of Shamakhi, with its largest mosque of the Caucasus and the tomb of the Shirvan Shahs, rulers of "Yeddi Gyumbyaz". On the road excursion Lahich – the small settlement of city type mislaid deeply in mountains of Greater Caucasus, a pearl of the Ismaily area, an ethnographic corner of Azerbaijan, unique by nature and a way of life of inhabitants. The soil and partially again paved asphalt way to the settlement of Lahich. Transportation to the settlement of Lahich is so stunning, as well as memorable for a long time, roads and magnificent beauty of landscapes. Making this trip undoubtedly remembered forever, woods, river and gorge & medical air Visit to the Historical and ethnographic reserve «Lahich» – this unique corner of the Ismaily area, attract travellers from around the world. This Natural isolation made Lahich a very typical settlement in Azerbaijan. Within many centuries the people living nearby in the mountain district and in the valley spoke not only on «azer» but also actively used in the communication of «Farsi», the Arab and Russian languages. However here, in this mountain village, inhabitants still spin lace on the unique Persian dialect. Proceed to Gabala to Visit Nij village famous with its ancient religious buildings and citizens, the only place in the world where Udins ethnicity lives that have its own authentic culture and traditions, visit of Chuhur Gabala - ruins of the ancient Caucasian Albania's capital Kabala a very significant place and huge educational centre for mags, priests of Zoroastrian temples.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Gabala

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 260 km

## Day 6

Drive to Sheki, one of the most famous and ancient places of Azerbaijan. Situated 700m above sea level like an amphitheatre surrounded by the mountains and forests of oak trees, this ancient city was long famed as a silk centre & important stop on the Great Silk Route. Start Sheki City Tour visiting the 18th century Khan's summer Palace with magnificent frescos and exquisite stained glass. Then visit "Shebeke" handmade frescos' workshop, "Pakhlava" famous local sweets' workshop and "Tekulduz" popular weaving workshop, walking in the old street to witness the different craftsman. Continue to discover



Sheki and visit Kish village and the legendary church. Legend says that the church was built in the year 78 AD, but the researchers place it a few centuries later.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Sheki*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *5-6 hours*

**Length:** *120 km*

### **Day 7**

You will be transferred from the Lagodekhi border and taken to Kvareli. Your excursion will continue to Nekresi - the monastery complex overlooks Alazani Valley. Then you will drive to Kvareli Tunnel, where will visit the famous winery "Khareba." Here you will have a tour around the factory, degustation of local wines, as well as a master class on baking Georgian bread shoti and national sweet churchkhela.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Kakheti*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *7-8 hours*

**Length:** *200 km*

### **Day 8**

The tour will start with Telavi – the centre of Kakheti region. Telavi is well-known for its delightful landscapes. Here you can see a 900-year old tree. After you will visit Tsinandali – the patrimony of a famous Georgian family – Chavchavadze. The estate is known for its amazing labyrinth planted with exotic trees in it and cellars, where the unique collection of Georgian and European wine is preserved. Then you will visit Signaghi - charming, compact settlement, which has been formed as a city in the 18th century by the king - Erekle the 2nd. It is surrounded by the defensive wall of 4 kilometres length. Nowadays, Signaghi is called "The City of Love"- because of its unique colouring and unrepeatabe atmosphere. Transfer back to Tbilisi.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Tbilisi*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *7-8 hours*

**Length:** *250 km*

### **Day 9**

This day you will visit Mtskheta – one of the most ancient towns in Georgia, known as the religious centre of the country. Here you will go up the hill to the Jvari Monastery – the amazing symbol of the Georgian church architecture. According to the legend, at the site of the monastery St. Nino established one of her three crosses. The excursion will continue to Svetitskhoveli Cathedral – the first and the main church in Georgia. Then you will have a City tour around Tbilisi – the bright and hospitable capital of Georgia. Trip to the historic district of Metekhi, where you will see the Assumption Church located on the picturesque hill. Next stop is Bridge of Peace – designed by a well-known Italian architect; it is one of the most famous city's landmarks. Going up to the Narikala Fortress, situated on a hill. You will reach the fortress by the cable car, and at the top, a spectacular view of the city opens. Going down on foot. The excursion will continue to the sulfuric baths – famous royal bath complex (XVII-XIX centuries), standing on the warm natural sulfur springs. That is one of the main attractions of the Old Town. Stroll around cosy Shardeni Street named after the French traveller Jean Chardin. The street has an architecture resembling Paris and is full of cosy cafes, boutiques, and interesting galleries. The tour will continue to Juma Mosque located on Botanical Street. Visit Meydan Square one of the central squares of Old Town. Excursion to Sioni church. There is kept one of the greatest relics of Georgia, the cross of St. Patriarchate.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Tbilisi*



*Meals: Breakfast*

*Duration: 7-8 hours*

*Length: 350 km*

### **Day 10**

After breakfast, you will drive to Ananuri Fortress – a well-preserved castle on the shore of the Zhinvali Reservoir, the former defensive fortress of the feudal era. Next place that you will visit Gudauri – popular ski resort which is beautiful in any season. Here you will see the Balcony dedicated to the treaty of Georgievsk and enjoy the amazing views to the mountains that open from here. After the 5-minute drive, you will reach Sour waters of Vedza. The place offers picturesque scenes. Then you will head to the Trinity Church (Gergeti) situated at an altitude of 2170 m at the foot of Mount Kazbek. The church was built in the XIV century and is the only cross-domed church in the historic Georgian province Khevi. From the top of the hill opens the incredibly beautiful scenery. In the evening you will drive back to Tbilisi.

*Overnight: Hotel in Tbilisi*

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Duration: 7-8 hours*

*Length: 250 km*

### **Day 11**

The day will start with visiting Gori – the heart of eastern Georgia and Stalin’s homeland. You will visit The Museum of Stalin - the unique place with the remained atmosphere of the Soviet Union era. After you will be transferred to Kutaisi, you will visit Bagrati Church and Gelati Monastery, unique for its mosaics and wall paintings. This monastery is a living symbol of Georgia’s Golden Age and is protected by UNESCO. Your tour will continue to the monastery of Motsameta located on a hill where, according to the legend, the Muslim invaders executed Georgian princes David and Konstantin Mkheidze who refused to be converted to Islam.

*Overnight: Hotel in Kutaisi*

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Duration: 7-8 hours*

*Length: 260 km*

### **Day 12**

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Svaneti - mysterious highland region of Georgia full of unique nature, architecture and customs. It is well-known for its ancient towers, perfect mountain views and local cuisine. Once you find Svaneti, you will never forget the time spent there. Visit Mestia – administrative centre of Svaneti and a picturesque town located at an elevation of 1500 metres (4921 feet) in the Caucasus Mountains.

*Overnight: Hotel in Mestia*

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Duration: 8-9 hours*

*Length: 300 km*

### **Day 13**

In the morning you will be taken to Ushguli - the highest eternal settlement in Europe. People connect the etymology of “Ushguli” to the word- “Ushishari Guli”- which is translated from Georgian as- “fearless heart”. This is because historically, the community of Ushguli was brave and has always been free. The village is located at an altitude of 2,100 metres (6,900 ft) near the foot of Shkhara, one of the highest summits of the Greater Caucasus mountains. Stop at Love tower-standing on Enguri River shore in village Ifari. According to an interesting legend, which is known by local inhabitants, the place



represents the symbol of lovers. On the road to Ushguli village, you will pass extreme road, which is such narrow in some parts that two cars can't pass the road simultaneously. When you reach the village, you will visit the church of the Virgin Lamaria, dated back to 9-10th centuries. Here are kept the ancient frescos. You will also visit Zhibiani – a small village located next to Ushguli, one of the best places for photo shoots and walking after you will be transferred back to Mestia.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Mestia*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *7-8 hours*

**Length:** *160 km*

#### **Day 14**

After breakfast, you will have a visit to Martvili canyons, that attracts a large number of visitors with its adorable wild nature, practically untouched places by humans. Martvili canyons used to be a bathing place for Dadiani family. Now people visit it to enjoy the scenery, its waterfalls and take a boat trip in the river with deep green colour. Then you will visit Prometheus Cave one of the richest caves in Europe. They are characterized by a variety of underground rivers and breathtaking landscapes. After visiting these beautiful sights, you will be transferred back to Kutaisi for an overnight.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Kutaisi*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *7-8 hours*

**Length:** *280 km*

#### **Day 15**

After breakfast, you will leave Kutaisi and take your route to Uplistsikhe cave town. This ancient town, carved in the rock, is one of the first towns in Georgia and it dates back to the end of II the beginning of I millennium BC. You will find huge echoing halls, long meandering corridor-streets, chambers for pagan worship and even the remains of Georgia's oldest theatre there. There are various kinds of halls, rooms, and buildings made in different epochs still survive. Then you will be transferred to Tbilisi.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Tbilisi*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *7-8 hours*

**Length:** *280 km*

#### **Day 16**

In the morning you will head to Georgia Armenia border, meet your Armenian representatives and start the tour in Armenia. Here the first stop we'll have at the cosy resort town of Dilijan known for its arts and crafts as well as picturesque lush nature and healing air. After an excursion to the medieval monasteries of Haghartsin and Goshavank. You will have rest in Dilijan.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Sevan*

**Meals:** *Breakfast*

**Duration:** *7-8 hours*

**Length:** *260 km*

#### **Day 17**

The tour will continue to Gegharkunik province best known for amazing Lake Sevan. It is one is highest freshwater lakes in the world located at an altitude of 1900 meters above the sea level. After a visit to Hayravank monastery, you will have a Trip along the part of the Great Silk Road towards the Selim Pass. Stop at 14th century Selim Caravansary – one of the



most well-preserved hostels along the ancient Great Silk Road. A trip along the part of the Great Silk Road towards the Selim Pass. Stop at 14th century Selim Caravansary – one of the most well-preserved hostels along the ancient Great Silk Road. You will have an overnight in a resort town Jermuk.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Jermuk

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 200 km

## Day 18

Trip to the pearl of Armenian Medieval architecture, the Monastery and the University of Tatev. The monastery can be reached by the longest cable car in the world which stretches over the 320 meter-deep Vorotan River Canyon. After we will visit Khndzoresk which is known for the unique cave town located on the slope. The caves of Khndzoresk stretch almost 3 km along the gorge. Before the construction of the bridge, the cave town was isolated. Now there is a suspension bridge leading to the cave town.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Goris

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 8-9 hours

**Length:** 260 km

## Day 19

The tour will continue through a narrow canyon to the valley of red rocks where Noravank Monastery is located. En route, you will visit wine factory to taste local wine made of the unique grape sort “Areni”. Trip to the south of Armenia to Khor Virap Monastery located at the foot of Biblical Mount Ararat. In the evening you will be in Yerevan for overnight.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 260 km

## Day 20

On this day, you will have a city tour around Yerevan, the ancient capital of Armenia, which was founded in 782 B.C. Armenians are proud that Yerevan is 29 years older than Rome. During the city tour, you will walk around the centre of the city and visit Cascade, Opera and Ballet Theater, Mashtots Avenue, and the Republic Square. The tour also includes a visit to History Museum.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 5-6 hours

**Length:** 40 km

## Day 21

This day you will have a 1-hour drive to the Canyon of Azat River. Our destination is Geghard Monastery. This unique monastery is carved into nearby rocks and the surrounding cliffs compose a great part of it. In 2000 it became a UNESCO heritage site. The trip leads us to Garni village, well known for its Garni temple – the only surviving example of Hellenistic architecture in the region.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

**Meals:** Breakfast



**Duration:** 6-7 hours

**Length:** 90 km

### **Day 22**

After breakfast at the hotel, you will head to Gyumri – a cultural centre and the second-largest city in Armenia. The city has a museum of local lore, a historical and cultural reserve, as well as five churches, a monastery, and an Orthodox chapel. The most beautiful and historically valuable of them is the church Amenaprkich (the Church of the Savior). The city was once the centre of education and culture in Armenia and the first Armenian opera was established in Gyumri in 1912. Today also you will visit Marmashen Monastery complex which was built 10th-11th cc.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Gyumri

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 140 km

### **Day 23**

Your next stop will be at the monument of Armenian Alphabet founded in 2005 to celebrate the 1600th anniversary of the alphabet foundation. Then you will head to Saghmosavank Monastery located at the yawning gorge carved by the Kasakh River. Amazing view of the Canyon will open in front of you once you reach the monastery. After we will visit the Amberd fortress which was built from the 7th to the 10th centuries. The castle itself and part of the fortress walls were built in the 7th century, under the reign of the princely family Kamsarakan. In the evening you will be back to your hotel in Yerevan.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Length:** 190 km

### **Day 24**

A short morning drive will take you to Echmiadzin town – the religious centre of all Armenians around the world. Hereafter the adoption of Christianity in 301 AD – was built the first Christian temple in the world – Echmiadzin Cathedral. It is the seat of the Supreme Patriarch of the Catholicos of all Armenians. The cathedral keeps an important religious relic – the Holy Lance spear. In 2000 Echmiadzin Cathedral was listed as a UNESCO site. You'll see the ruins of Zvartnots temple (7th century, UNESCO World Heritage Site), that was a miracle of its time. The trip will continue to the Genocide Memorial – a solemn reminder of the first genocide of the 20th century.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Duration:** 5-6 hours

**Length:** 40 km

### **Day 25**

You will have a free day in Yerevan.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 26**

Transfer to the airport, departure.





### **Booking terms and conditions**

Once we received your application, confirmed all tour details with you, we will send a deposit invoice. After the deposit of 100 euro per person (depending on the tour price) is received, we will start your hotel reservation and other service booking and will send your Tour Voucher with all the trip details.

### **Payment Terms**

After you have booked the tour, it is necessary to make a non-refundable deposit of 50-100 euros, which will provide our coordinators with the possibility to start organizing a trip (hotel reservation, food, transportation, etc.). Final payment could be made after your arrival on the spot. We reserve the right to cancel your booking and apply the relevant cancellation charges (detailed below) if we do not receive all payments at the due time.

### **Cancellation of the tour**

If you or a member of your group wants to cancel the tour, please, inform our company as soon as possible in writing form. Please, note that the prepayment (50-100 euros) is non-refundable, however, you can use it throughout the year and book another tour. In this case, our company will have to charge an extra 100 euros for re-booking the hotel.

### **Rights and obligations**

Tours provided by our company are planned for many months before its inception and are not the subject of change or cancellation. Under the obligation of forced circumstances (weather, holidays) we can make some changes in the itinerary, however, all that relates to services and attractions will remain unchanged.

Please note, that our tours require a minimum number of participants – 2 persons. We reserve the right to cancel the trip, if any tour will not have the minimum number of participants. We will inform you about the cancellation of the tour no later than 30 days before the start and will do the full refund of the amount paid, including the prepayment.

We also request immediately and promptly report all complaints and any claims during the tour. If possible, all problems will be solved. If the tourist does not report any complaint, the compensation will not be implemented.

Please, also note that the company Arara Tour is not liable for services not included in the tour price. Our responsibility is limited only to the extent provided by our tour.

Force majeure or any other event which is beyond our control and which is not preventable by reasonable diligence on our part frees both parties from liability or obligation. In case of Force majeure, we don't issue any refund.

### **Insolvency or bankruptcy insurance**

Tour operator Arara guarantees the refund of clients' money for unfulfilled services even in the case of company's own insolvency or bankruptcy.

