

Exquisite Caucasus - Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan

Key information

Duration: 16 days / 15 nights

Best season: Year round

Tour type: Individual (starting from 2 pax)

What's included:

Airport transfers, accommodation in hotels 15 nights (4* hotels with free Wi-Fi double room), breakfast, lunches, welcome dinner in each country, all transfers in air-conditioned vehicles, English speaking guide service for all days, all admission fees, Lavash master class in Garni, Gata master class in Chiva, wine tasting in Areni, 4 wheel drive vehicle for Gergeti Trinity Church, wine tasting in Signaghi, 1 bottle of water per day (0.5lt.), 24 hour office support Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan

What's not included:

Flights, visa fee, medical insurance

Itinerary in brief

- Day 1 - Arrival in Yerevan - Yerevan City Tour - Genocide Memorial - History museum
- Day 2 - Etchmiadzin Cathedral - Garni Pagan Temple - Geghard Cave Monastery
- Day 3 - Khor Virap - Old Bridge winery - Noravank monastery - Goris
- Day 4 - Tatev monastery - Selim caravanserai - Hayravank - Lake Sevan - Dilijan
- Day 5 - Dilijan old complex - Fioletovo - Haghpat Monastery - Armenia-Georgia border - Tbilisi city tour
- Day 6 - Ananuri fortress - Gudauri - Trinity Church - Tbilisi
- Day 7 - Mtskheta - Jvari - Château Mukhrani - Kutaisi
- Day 8 - Martvili - Prometheus Cave - Gelati - Akhalcikhe
- Day 9 - Vardzia - Rabati Castle - Ufliscikhe - Tbilisi
- Day 10 - Kakheti - Tsinandali village - Telavi
- Day 11 - Khareba - Signaghi - Bodbe
- Day 12 - Transfer to the border - Sheki - Palace of Shaki Khans - Sheki Caravanserai - Silk Carpet Shop of Sheki
- Day 13 - Gabala - Friday Mosque in Shamakhi
- Day 14 - Baku City tour
- Day 15 - Gobustan National Park - Bibi Heybat Mosque
- Day 16 - Departure



Detailed itinerary

Day 1

After your arrival at the airport, you will be transferred to Yerevan. 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 center of the city and visit Cascade, Opera and Ballet theater, Mashtots Avenue, and the Republic Square. Continue to History of Armenia. In the evening you will have a welcome dinner in a traditional restaurant with folk show.

Overnight: *Hotel in Yerevan*

Meals: *Lunch, Dinner*

Day 2

A short morning drive will take you to Echmiadzin town – the religious center of all Armenians around the world. Here – after 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 an UNESCO site. You'll see the ruins of Zvartnots temple (7th century, UNESCO World Heritage Site), that was a miracle of its time. This day you will also 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. Here you will have an opportunity to see how Armenian flat bread called Lavash is being made.

Overnight: *Hotel in Yerevan*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 3

The day will start with a trip to Ararat Province where proudly stands one of the holiest sites in Armenia – Khor Virap Monastery. You will hike up a small hill to discover the monastery and enjoy the breathtaking view on Biblical Mount Ararat. Continue to Old Bridge winery and try local wine with. Lunch will be organized in the same winery for you to feel the whole spectrum of Armenian hospitality. The tour will continue through a narrow canyon to the valley of red rocks, right where Noravank Monastery is located – built in the 13th century it is a masterpiece of Armenian architect Momik. On the territory of the monastery amazing khachkars are scattered all around – crosstones designed by Momik. The tour will end with a visit to Goris town for an overnight.

Overnight: *Hotel in Goris*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 4

The day is dedicated to the pearl of Armenian Medieval architecture, the Monastery and University of Tatev. Here you have chance to ride on the longest cable car in the world 5.7 km over the 320 meter-deep Vorotan River Canyon. You will continue to Selim pass which was a section of the Great Silk Road. Stop at 14th century Selim Caravanserai – one of the most well preserved hostels along the ancient Great Silk Road. 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. Here you will have a stop in Hayravank Monastery. We continue our trip further north to Tavush Province. Here we have a stop at the cozy resort town of Dilijan known for its arts and crafts as well as picturesque lush nature and healing air. Here you will have an overnight.

Overnight: *Hotel in Dilijan*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*



Day 5

In the morning you will have a walk in the old part of Dilijan and enjoy the local atmosphere. Further visit Russian Molokan village Fioletovo. After an excursion, head to Haghpat monastery listed as UNESCO object. Drive to the Armenian-Georgian border. Meet your Georgian representatives and continue to Tbilisi for a city tour. Visit to Tsminda Sameba – the main church of Georgian Orthodox Church and the highest temple in Georgia. Continue to the historical district of Metekhi, where you will see the Assumption Church located on the picturesque hill. 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 by foot. Excursion to the sulfuric baths – famous royal bath complex (XVII-XIX cc.), standing on the warm natural sulfur springs. The way will continue to Juma Mosque located on the Botanical Street. Excursion to Sioni church - one of the greatest relics of Georgia is kept there - the cross of St. Patriarchate. In the evening you will head to a traditional restaurant and have dinner accompanied by Georgian traditional show.

Overnight: *Hotel in Tbilisi*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 6

After breakfast at the hotel 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. Have Stop in 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 opens from here. After 5-minute drive, you will visit Sour waters of Vedza. The place offers picturesque scenes. Visit 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-th 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.

Overnight: *Hotel in Tbilisi*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 7

Morning drive to Mtskheta – one of the most ancient towns in Georgia, known as the religious center 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. Excursion will continue to Svetitskhoveli Cathedral – the first and the main church in Georgia. Head to Château Mukhrani and have Wine Testing and master class of different Georgian dishes. Drive to Kutaisi and accommodation at the hotel

Overnight: *Hotel in Kutaisi*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 8

In the morning you will have a city tour around Kutaisi. The tour will continue to the Prometheus Cave – one of the most unique in Europe. It is characterized by impressive reliefs of stalactites and stalagmites and a variety of underground rivers. Excursion to the monastery of Gelati. This monastery is a living symbol of Georgia's Golden Age and is protected by UNESCO. You will also have a Visit to Martvili Canyon - the hidden gem of Samegrelo Region in western Georgia. Drive to Akhatsikhe and accommodation at the hotel.

Overnight: *Hotel in Akhatsikhe*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 9

In the morning, after delicious breakfast at the hotel you will start your tour with an excursion to Vardzia – a unique cave complex of the Golden Age (XII -XIII cent.), the first cave of which was created during the reign of Queen Tamar's



father, George III. In ancient times, the complex served as a refuge for civilians. On the territory of Vardzia there is a functioning monastery and temples. Continue to Rabati Castle – a medieval structure in Akhaltsikhe which is dated back to the XIII-th. Recently renovated Rabati Castle was reopened in Akhaltsikhe in August 2012 and now is the main attraction of the town. On the way to Tbilisi, you will visit the cave town of Uplistsikhe. This ancient cave town, carved into the volcanic rock of Kvernaki ridge, is one of the first in Georgia and is famous for its three-thousand-year history. Once there were houses, streets, churches, public buildings and squares.

Overnight: *Hotel in Tbilisi*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 10

Morning drive will take you to Kakheti – the picturesque region famous for the producing of excellent Georgian wines. Visit to Tsinandali village – the patrimony of 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. Stroll around Telavi – the center of Kakheti region. Telavi is well-known for its delightful landscapes. There you can see 9-hundred-year old tree. Tour around the famous winery Khareba. Here you will have degustation of local wines, as well as a master class on baking Georgian bread shoti and national sweet.

Overnight: *Hotel in Signaghi*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 11

Visit to the famous winery “Khareba.” Here you will have a tour around the factory, degustation of local wines. Stroll around Signaghi – “the town of love” famous for its architecture in the style of southern Italian classicism. The town has recently undergone significant restoration and infrastructural improvement, rendering Signaghi a must-see destination in Georgia. The tour continues to Bodbe monastery. The cathedral was constructed in IV century AD, on the tomb of St. Nino who introduced Christianity in Georgia. One of the biggest shrines of the monastery is miraculous icon of Mother Mary of Iveria. Free time in Signaghi.

Overnight: *Hotel in Signaghi*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 12

Transfer to Georgia-Azerbaijan border. We will meet and greet you at the border, and then you will departure for Sheki city. Firstly, you will check in your hotel in Sheki, and then you will have a sightseeing tour around Sheki. You will visit the Upper Town, the magnificent Palace of Sheki Khans and the Craft Museum. Built in 1797 as a summer residence for Muhammad Hasan Khan, the Palace of Sheki Khans is a masterpiece of lavish decoration. Both the exterior and interior decorations of the palace embody the architectural glamor of the ancient Sheki Khanate. After the lunch, you will visit Museum of carpets (there are various big rooms with pottery, silk embroidery, and national costumes, jewelry) Shebeke craft workshop, Sheki Bazaar, and the local sweet bakery. We advise you to try famous Sheki sweet baklava – the pride of Sheki population. After a long day delving into the many treasures of Sheki you will return back to the hotel to have a rest. Then you will have dinner in one of the best local restaurants.

Overnight: *Hotel in Sheki*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 13

After breakfast at your hotel in Sheki, you will explore Gabala – the ancient capital of Azerbaijan. This veritable melting pot of culture and tradition is a joy to explore. Whilst traveling through Gabala in the north of Azerbaijan you will take the



time to experience a small but significant part of the religious tolerance within the country. First, you will visit the Church of the Udi, near Gabala, in the village of Nij. This small church is special. It belongs to the native people of the Caucasus – the Udi people. There are only a few thousand Udi people in the world today and the majority, approx. 4.000, live in this area in Azerbaijan. Today they practice Orthodox Christianity and you will be welcomed with their kindness to see their church, renovated and used. You will then head to the village of Chukhur Gabala home to interesting ruins from its time as the former capital of Caucasian Albania. During the tour, the guide will explain interesting facts about the history, cultural heritage of Gabala. Then you will get acquainted with the Gabala Archeology Center. The three-storey building of the Gabala Archeology Center has a showroom, an archeological collection, a restoration lab, a conference hall and study rooms for archeologists. So here, you can see the exhibition features about 1,500 items discovered during excavation. Now it is time to visit the must-see natural beauties of Gabala. First, you will head to Tufandag Mountain, riding the Cable car, then the Gabala Lake, where you can ride a non-powered boat. Gabala Lake is a gem, half-natural, half man-made. The tour will continue to Samakhih city and have a sightseeing of historical Juma Mosque of Shamakhi. On the way to Baku, visit Diri Baba Mausoleum in Maraza village. In the evening you will have dinner in Baku.

Overnight: *Hotel in Baku*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 14

This day you will have a tour around Baku Old City. You will visit the legendary Zoroastrian Maiden Tower of the 5th c. Then you will walk to the old bazaar. The entire old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and during the city tour you will visit the oldest Multani Caravanserai, the Haji Banu Hamam of the 15th c., the Juma Mosque (Friday Mosque), as well as the Shirvanshahs' Palace (the most striking example of the medieval palace structures in Azerbaijan, dating to the middle of 15th century), antique carpet shops and museum. After the city tour, you will have lunch (Azerbaijan National Cuisine) in one of the beautifully designed restaurants in old town. After the lunch, you will continue the remaining program of sightseeing excursion. You will visit the Upland Park of Baku where you can enjoy the panoramic view of the city and bay of Baku. Then you will head to Martyr's Line or Alley of Martyrs formerly the Kirov Park, where is a cemetery and memorial dedicated to those killed by the Soviet Army during Black January. You will be also impressed by the modern district with the three Flame Towers near the Upland Park, overlooking the city. They look as if they have been thrown from heavens into the city by some fabulous giants. The next place to visit is Baku Boulevard. You will have a walk along Baku Boulevard, the second longest one in Europe. You can get a boat and make 30 minutes trip along Baku Bay. During Baku Bay Cruise, you will enjoy splendid panoramic views of Baku from the sea while learning about Baku and its history. After the boat trip, you will visit the Carpet Museum. It demonstrates carpets in close connection with other kinds of traditional handicrafts of Azerbaijan. Once you finish Baku Boulevard tour, you will head to Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center. An internationally recognized architectural marvel, Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center displays a curved modern style.

Overnight: *Hotel in Baku*

Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 15

Start your day with a breakfast at your hotel and enjoy a beautiful drive out of Baku to visit the Gobustan National Park. You will travel 64 km southwest of Baku along with the Caspian shore. The tour will start from Gobustan Museum where you will see ancient human bones, work tools used in back to thousand years ago during the Mesolithic Period. Then, you will advance to the mountain in order to see real Rock Paintings in the open-air museum. You will also get a chance to marvel at the Mud Volcanoes in the Gobustan Reserve, which is home to almost half of the world's mud volcanoes. At the





end of the Gobustan tour, you will return to Baku. On the way back to Baku, we will have lunch at a local restaurant on the Caspian Sea Coast. After the lunch around 14:00 we will see the Bibi-Heybat Mosque.

Overnight: Hotel in Baku

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 16

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 50-100 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 AraraTour 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.

