

## Armenia, Georgia & Azerbaijan Hiking Tour

### Key information

Duration: 18 days / 17 nights

Best season: May - October

Tour type: Small group / individual

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### What's included:

Airport transfers, accommodation in hotels (double/twin rooms), in guesthouses, meals - breakfast, 3 bottles of water per day (0.5lt.), all transfers in air conditioned vehicles, English-speaking hiking guide service for all days, local mountain guide service where needed, all admissions fees.

### What's not included:

Flights, visa fee, medical insurance

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### Itinerary in brief

Day 1 - Yerevan City Tour - Garni - Geghard  
Day 2 - Areni - Noravank - King Smbat Fortress - Tsakhats Kar  
Day 3 - Selim Caravanserai - Noratus - Hayravank  
Day 4 - Sevan - Sevanavank - Parz Lake - Goshavank - Dilijan  
Day 5 - Yenokavan - Lastiver  
Day 6 - Armenia-Georgia border - Tbilisi City Tour  
Day 7 - Gudauri - Vedza - Gergeti - Gveleti  
Day 8 - Abudelaury lakes  
Day 9 - Roshka - Ananuri - Mtskheta - Borjomi  
Day 10 - Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park - Tbilisi  
Day 11 - Sighnaghi - Bodbe - Tbilisi  
Day 12 - Transfer to the Tbilisi Airport - Flight Tbilisi-Baku - Arrival in Baku - Baku City tour  
Day 13 - Baku - Sheki - Sheki city tour  
Day 14 - Sheki - Udi Church – Lahij  
Day 15 - Lahij – Burov - Lahij  
Day 16 - Sulut – Baku  
Day 17 - Atashgah – Yanardag - Gala - Baku  
Day 18 - Transfer to the airport in Baku - Departure



## Detailed itinerary

### Day 1

This trip begins with a city tour in Yerevan, the cuneiform inscription proving Yerevan was built in 782 B.C is in the History Museum of Armenia. You will start your tour with a short walk in the city center, and then visit Armenia History Museum. Excursion in the History museum is a fascinating Journey through the pages of Armenian History. After lunch you will head to Geghard Cave Monastery, partly carved pure rocks. Garni Pagan Temple is the only preserved in the Caucasus region. You will be back to Yerevan and have the opportunity to feel the pulse of Yerevan nightlife as our itinerary starting from the second day gets you to the regions to hiking routes of this ancient country.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Yerevan

### Day 2

Today you'll begin exploring Southern Armenia. Our first stop will be the Areni wine market where you'll have a chance to taste one of the famous wines in Armenia. You will continue the trip to the beautiful two storied Noravank Monastery through the deep narrow canyon surrounded with red rocks. Then you will head to Hermon Village standing amidst a charming valley of Yeghegis river. After checking in at the hotel you will start your hike to the medieval well preserved fortress of King Smbat, standing on the elevation of about 1950, you will continue to Tsakhats Kar Monastery on the elevation of 2080 m. Afterwards you will have a walk on a lighter note to Yeghegis village where you can find Jewish Cemetery and little churches right in the gardens of villagers. Your hotel in Hermon village has all the amenities (swimming pool, thermal baths and gym) and bikes, horses to organize your evening well.

*(hiking trail length 12 km)*

**Overnight:** Hotel in Hermon

**Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 3

This day is a relaxed day, you will cover a part of The Great Silk Road, see one of well-preserved caravanserais. You will have feelings here as time has stopped for a long time as very little has changed here. During your trip you will also visit the medieval cemetery of khachkars (cross-stones) – Noratus. Khachkars are unique works of art, they can be found only in Armenian culture. In the stone patterns of khachkar the master embodied his soul and faith. Here you will visit Hayravank - 9th to 12th century Armenian monastery.

**Overnight:** Hotel at lake Sevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 4

This day you will be driven to Lake Sevan, and admire one of the highest freshwater lakes from the hilltop of Sevan Peninsula. Here you will visit Sevanavank- monastery complex located on a peninsula at the northwestern shore of Lake Sevan. You will head to Parz Lake (Crystal) to start hiking in Dilijan National Park along stunning forest trails, cross the wildly beautiful Areguni Pass and reach Goshavank Monastery of Gosh village, where the great scholar of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Mkhitar Gosh lived. You will be driven to Dilijan, a cozy town that captures the spirit of rural Armenia. A visit to the newly opened Old Dilijan complex on historic Sharambeyan Street and observing the weaving carpets by local women at Tufenkian Carpet Showroom will be a great finale for this day. *(hiking trail length 8 km)*



**Overnight:** Hotel in Dilijan

**Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 5

After breakfast at the hotel you will head to Yenokavan Village near Ijevan where you will take a short transfer to the Lastiver trail head. A wonderful forested route into the most unspoilt and rugged area of north-eastern Armenia as you will head into a deep gorge before descending to cascading waterfalls and the most scenic meadows in Armenia, perhaps Armenia's best-kept secret. Explore ancient caves of Lastiver. In the evening you'll be back to the town of Ijevan for rest and overnight. (*hiking trail length 7 km*)

**Overnight:** Guesthouse in Ijevan

**Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 6

After discovering the wonderful culture, nature and architecture of Armenia, a fascinating journey around Georgia is waiting for you. After your breakfast you will be transferred to the Armenia-Georgia border, from where after passing the customs "Sadakhlo" you'll head to Tbilisi – the hospitable capital of Georgia. Your trip in this country will start with a city tour during which you will head to the historical district of Metekhi where you will visit the Assumption Church located on the picturesque hill. You will also visit one of the most famous city's landmarks – the Bridge of Peace designed by the Italian architect. You will reach the Narikala Fortress by a cable car. The fortress is located on a hill overlooking Tbilisi and Kura River – an excellent place for memorable photos. You will also have a chance to stroll around the most famous streets of Tbilisi – Chardin, to visit the mosque located on the Botanical Street, the waterfall – an amazing attraction of the Botanical Garden. Your last stop will be at the royal bath complex of the XVII-XIX centuries which is one of the most famous sights of the Old Town.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Tbilisi

**Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 7

This day you will be driven to Kazbegi, Stepantsminda which is one of the most picturesque villages of Georgia. During your trip you will visit Gudauri, where you can see the balcony, dedicated to the treaty of Georgievsk and enjoy breathtaking views. A few minutes drive from Gudauri is located Vedza Sour Waters which with its natural beauty will amaze you. When you reach Stepantsminda you will start hiking to the Holy Trinity Church of Gergeti which is located at an altitude of 2170 m. Hiking to the church takes 1,5 hr. After visiting Holy Trinity Church, continue the drive to Gveleti Big Waterfalls.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Stepatsminda

**Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 8

In the morning you will walk towards Chaukhi Mountains and enjoy the beautiful nature. Your hiking will continue to Khevsureti which is known for its amazing mysterious Abudelaure lakes. Formed of glaciers the lakes have three different colors: green, blue and milky color. Lots of legends and myths are connected to these lakes. After crossing the Chaukhi pass you will have an opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Abudelaure White Lake. Next you will visit Blue and Green Lakes and near Green Lake you will have a rest and overnight in camps. (*hiking trail length 11 km*)



**Overnight:** *Guesthouse in Roshka village*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 9**

You will wake up in an amazing place surrounded by unbelievable nature. On this day you will continue your trip to the village Roshka, where a 4-rd wheel vehicle will be waiting for you to take you to Borjomi. On the way you will visit Ananuri medieval fortress, the ancient town Mtskheta which was the first capital of Georgia. "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta" is a UNESCO world heritage site. At the end of the day you will reach Borjomi where you will have a rest overnight. (*hiking trail length 6 km*)

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Borjomi*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 10**

This day you will discover Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, one of the biggest ones in Georgia. You will walk to the lovely Likani River Gorge then climb up the Chitakhevi Range. You will enjoy breathtaking scenery, bird singing and isolation from the daily hustle in Borjomi NP. Here you may come across rare species of plants, birds included in the Red List. Evening transfer to Tbilisi for rest and overnight. (*hiking trail length 7 km*)

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Tbilisi*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 11**

In the morning you will drive to the east of the country, to Kakheti – the main winemaking region of Georgia. A pleasant time is waiting for you in Signaghi – a royal town founded by the king Erekle II in the 18th century. Strolling around the tiny streets you will enjoy the local architecture and atmosphere.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Tbilisi*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 12**

In the morning you will head to the airport and have a flight to Baku. After your arrival and transfer to the hotel, you will have an evening city tour around 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 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. The project of the centre was designed by the winner of Pritzker prize and internationally recognized architect Zaha Hadid.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Baku*



**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 13**

Departure to Sheki, after breakfast. This day will be devoted to Sheki's sights: 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 glamour of the ancient Sheki Khanate. Afterwards, you will visit the Museum of carpets (there are various big rooms with pottery, silk embroidery, and national costumes, jewellery) Shebeke craft workshop, Sheki Bazaar, and the local sweet bakery. We advise you to try famous Sheki sweet baklava – the pride of Sheki population. The tour will continue to the village of Kish. Here is located one of the oldest Orthodox churches in the world. It was founded in 62 by Saint Elisha, one of the 70 apostles. At the end of the tour, you will head to the hotel in Lahij for rest and overnight.

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Sheki*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 14**

The tour programme will start with a nice trip to the village of Nij where is located a unique Udi Church. 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. The tour will proceed to the village of Lahij which is a notable place in Azerbaijan, with its authentic handicrafts traditions, particularly related to copper. Your overnight will be in Lahij.

*(hiking trail length 6 km)*

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Lahij*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 15**

The day will start with a nice walk around Lahij village which is considered one of the oldest settlements in Azerbaijan. The area is known for its craftsmen who produce unique copper items decorated by special ornaments. The other no less popular skill of the locals is the producing of leather goods. Here you will also have a chance to admire the ornaments of local carpets known all over the South Caucasus. After the tour you will have hiking to Burov village. *(hiking trail length 12 km)*

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Lahij*

**Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 16**

The day will start with a trip to Sulut village located in Ismailli district. Sulut is a nice place surrounded by mountainous nature. You will explore the village and then hike to the ruins of Girkh Otag castle belonging to XIV-XVII centuries. You will have a nice hike through mountain woods. After hiking you will be transferred to Baku for an overnight. *(hiking trail length 18 km)*

**Overnight:** *Hotel in Baku*

**Meals:** Breakfast



**Day 17**

In about 40 km from Baku there is Gala ethnographic open-air museum which will be the first tour destination of this day. The museum was founded about 10 years ago on the site of the archaeological excavations of Gala village. Here you will discover how Azeri lived in the period from the XVI to XIX centuries. This day you will also have a master class on the preparation of gutab which is a national crescent-shaped unleavened pie with filling. As a filling is used meat, greens, pumpkin. Continue to the Zoroastrian temple-museum "Ateshgah". After an excursion in Ateshgah you will head to mound Yanar Dag. You can also visit an interesting museum of modern art, the exhibits of which are created by an international team of artists and sculptors from items collected at the dump.

**Overnight:** Hotel in Baku

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Day 18**

Transfer to the airport, departure.

**Meals:** Breakfast in hotel



### **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 200 EUR/USD/GBP 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 200 EUR, 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 (200 EUR) 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 200 EUR 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 the company's own insolvency or bankruptcy.

