



NEW

Armenia, Zvartnots Temple ruins

Trans-Caucasian Explorer

Privately escorted tour - 13 days/12 nights

The fascinating Caucasus region is a melting pot of diverse cultures, religion and ancient history. It's where Europe meets Asia, with a backdrop of dramatic scenery and genuine hospitality. You'll experience oil-rich Azerbaijan, with its audacious 21st century architecture, glorious Georgia and its spectacular scenery and ancient Armenia - one of the earliest Christian civilisations.

region, offering superb views of the Great Caucasus Mountains. Your traditional lunch with homemade wine is hosted by a local farmer, followed by a tasting at a 300-year-old wine cellar. Overnight at 18th century Sighnaghi. **BLD**

stretching over half a kilometre along the Mtkvari River. En route, visit the 10th century Khertvisi Fortress. Early evening arrival at the Armenian border, where you meet your guide and driver and continue to Gyumri. Overnight Gyumri. **B**

Inclusions

- 12 nights accommodation with breakfast in 3 & 4-star hotels or guesthouses
- Meals - 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- Arrival/departure transfers by car
- Transportation by A/C vehicle
- Escorted throughout by **English speaking** guide
- Sightseeing as specified

Your hotels

- **Baku** - Sapphire Inn
- **Sheki** - Sheki Saray
- **Sighnaghi** - Kabadoni
- **Stepantsminda** - Porta
- **Tbilisi** - Ambassador
- **Akhaltzikhe** - Lomsia
- **Gyumri** - Viktoria Plaza
- **Yerevan** - Ani Plaza

Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.

Day 1 Baku

Arrival Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. You will be met and transferred to your hotel. Overnight Baku.

Day 2 Baku

Morning tour of Baku's highlights: Martyr's Alley, the historical inner town of Icheri Shekher and the ancient Palace of Shirvan-shakhs. Walk to the medieval caravanserai and enter the Maiden Tower, the symbol of Baku. Drive to Gobustan to see the UNESCO-listed Petroglyph Reserve and Archaeological Museum. Overnight Baku. **B**

Day 3 Baku to Sheki

Drive west through the most scenic areas of Azerbaijan to Shemakha and visit the 15th century Diri Baba Mausoleum, carved out of a cliff, the 10th century Yeddi Gumbaz mosque and the tomb of the royal family of Shirvan Kahn. Arrive Sheki and visit Sheki Khans Palace, with its magnificent frescoes and stained-glass. Overnight Sheki. **B**

Day 4 Sheki to Sighnaghi

At the border of Azerbaijan and Georgia (Ladodekhi), meet your Georgian driver and guide. Explore the Kakheti wine

Day 5 Sighnaghi to Mtskheta & Stepantsminda

Today you visit Georgia's ancient capital and religious centre of Mtskheta. You will see the 5th century Orthodox monastery of Jvari and the royal cathedral of Svetitskhoveli - both UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Continue along the Military Highway, stopping at the 17th century Ananuri Fortress, before arriving in Stepantsminda (Kazbegi). Overnight Stepantsminda. **BD**

Day 6 Stepantsminda to Tbilisi

This morning's tour of Kazbegi begins with a leisurely 2-hour walk through valleys and woodland to the 14th century Gergeti Trinity Church, 2170m above sea level. Walk back to town and continue your drive to Tbilisi. Overnight Tbilisi. **B**

Day 7 Tbilisi

Wander through the Old Town, with its winding lanes overhung by wooden balconies. See the landmark 13th century Metekhi Church, perched on a cliff overlooking the Mtkvari River. Drive to the Narikala Fortress for panoramic views of the town and continue with a visit to the treasury of the Georgian State Museum (closed Mondays). Overnight Tbilisi. **B**

Day 8 Tbilisi to Uplistsikhe, Borjomi & Akhaltsikhe

After breakfast, drive to Gori and the Uplistsikhe Cave Town, the oldest in Georgia. It was one of the main stops along the Silk Road. Visit the spa town of Borjomi, famous for its mineral water. Overnight Akhaltsikhe. **BD**

Day 9 Akhaltsikhe to Vardzia & Gyumri

Depart for Vardzia, the magnificent 12th century cave town of the Golden Age,

Day 10 Gyumri to Yerevan

Gyumri was devastated by an earthquake in 1988, but its 19th century architecture has been preserved. Visit the fortress complex of Amberd, known as the 'fortress in the clouds' due to its elevation of 2,300m. Overnight Yerevan. **B**

Day 11 Yerevan & Garni-Geghard

Today you visit Garni Temple. The citadel and pagan temple is the only standing Greco-Roman colonnaded building in Armenia. It is the best-known structure and symbol of pre-Christian Armenia. Higher up the gorge of the Azat River stands the UNESCO-listed medieval Geghard Monastery, partially hewn from the rock. Overnight Yerevan. **B**

Day 12 Yerevan, Zvartnots & Echmiadzin

After breakfast, visit the ruins of the 7th century UNESCO-listed Zvartnots Temple and Echmiadzin, the centre of the Armenian Church. Built in 301-303, this is the oldest Christian church in Armenia and the main shrine of religious Christians worldwide. You will also visit the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Park and Museum to the Genocide victims. Overnight Yerevan. **B**

Day 13 Yerevan

Tour services end after breakfast, with your transfer to the airport. **B**



Tour price & departures

Prices shown per person in AUD.
Daily departures May-Oct 2019.

Departures	Twn	Sgl
1 May-31 Oct	5407	9553