

# Georgia & Azerbaijan

Led by the Revd Peter and Mrs Carol Paine

Wednesday 16th - Tuesday 29th September 2020



Vardzia

Welcome to our tour of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Georgia was converted from paganism by St. Nino in the 4th C. the third country to adopt the Christian faith. Azerbaijan is best known for its capital Baku where the first oil wells struck the liquid gold in 1848.



We will visit sites on the ancient Great Silk Road in both countries and dine in a caravanserai. Other highlights will include the ancient capital Mtskheta, spectacular views in and of the Caucasus mountains, remote villages, churches and monasteries, the cave town of Vardzia and much else. I hope you can join us on this tour rich in ancient and modern history, culture and religion.

### **Day 1: Fly to Tbilisi**

Depart from London Gatwick airport on our flight to Tbilisi. On arrival transfer to hotel for overnight in Tbilisi.

### **Day 2: Tbilisi**

Take a walking tour of Old Tbilisi. Tbilisi is a blend of Asian eeriness and European charm. Located in the gorge of Mtkvari River it's shaped out in accordance with the terrain and forms a very beautiful city with Mt. Mtatsminda embracing the entire town, Narikala Fortress topping up the oldest quarter of Tbilisi – Kala and Metekhi Church overlooking Mtkvari River from a rocky plateau.

In this classic tour of Tbilisi you'll see the highlights of the Old Town with beautiful Orthodox Christian Churches, Mosque, Synagogue, famous and refreshing Sulphur Baths, narrow cobbled streets with hanging wooden carved multi-coloured balconies and the 19th century houses following the architectural styles of the 19th century Europe, Narikala Fortress, the glass Bridge of Peace, Freedom Square and Rustaveli Avenue. Finish your tour on Rustaveli Avenue and transfer to a hotel.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.

### **Day 3: Tbilisi/David Gareja/Tbilisi**

Today we travel to a semi desert landscape of Georgia where we see beautiful monastery of David Gareja. First, we visit Lavra monastery and then take a 2.5hr round trip walk to Udabno caves. We enjoy the spectacular views across Azerbaijan from the top of the ridge. After the tour we drive to Tbilisi.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.

### **Day 4: Tbilisi/Mtskheta/Kazbegi**

Meet your guide and driver in the morning and take a tour to the ancient capital and religious centre of Georgia – Mtskheta with its historical sites: the Church of Jvari (6th century) and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (11th century). Jvari and Svetitskhoveli are World Heritage Sites of UNESCO. And as the legend says Svetitskhoveli houses the Robe of Christ. Mtskheta is the town where St. Nino – a 14-year old Cappadocian maiden preached Christianity as early as 4th century BC and converted Georgia officially to Christianity in 337AD making Georgia the third official Christian country in the world.



Tbilisi

Travel to the Great Caucasus Mountains along the Georgian Military Highway. Visit Ananuri fortified church. Over the Cross Pass arrive in Kazbegi.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Kazbegi.

### **Day 5: Kazbegi/Gergeti/Gveleti/Dariali Gorge/Kazbegi**

Take a walk to Gergeti Trinity Church offering great views down the town. Later we drive along Dariali Gorge all the way to the Russian border.

Then we can take an optional afternoon walk to Gveleti waterfall (1-1.5hours; we drive through Dariali Gorge by our bus). Return to Kazbegi.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Kazbegi.

### **Day 6: Kazbegi/Juta/Mt. Chaukhebi/Kazbegi**

Enjoy an adventurous day by 4WD. First, we visit the remote village Juta, cut off from the rest of the country for 6 months by snow, to visit a local family and see how they make Georgian cheese. Here we'll also taste traditional Georgian yogurt "Matsoni" and mountain honey. Then we take a walk towards breath-taking Mt. Chaukhebi. The gorge runs through all the way to the moraine. Here we finish our walk and take the same way back to get on 4WD and return to Kazbegi.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Kazbegi.

### **Day 7: Kazbegi/Gori/Uplistsikhe/Akhaltzikhe**

Continue to Gori – the town where Georgia's infamous son J. Stalin was born. We visit original house where he was born, museum and bullet proof carriage. Departing this still communist-looking town we delve deep to Georgia's ancient history by visiting the cave city Uplistsikhe which used to host the old caravans transporting goods from Asia to Europe as it was on the Great Silk Road route. After the tour transfer to Akhaltzikhe via Borjomi (time permitting we can stop at Children's Park for tasting water).

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Akhaltzikhe.

### **Day 8: Akhaltzikhe/Vardzia**

Visit Rabati Castle (closed on Mondays, opens at 10am).

Today we visit one of the highlights in Georgia – Vardzia cave town (12th c). On our way we stop to climb Khertvisi fortress (10th century).

The town still amazes its visitors with its grander, beauty and mystical



atmosphere. Wondering in this cave town will truly take you back to the 12th c when Georgia was flourishing, the period of Georgian renaissance. Here you will see a small enchanting church, beautiful for its frescoes, dwelling quarters, wine cellars and granaries, pharmacy and even the library can still be seen here.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Vardzia.

### **Day 9: Vardzia/Paravani Lake/Tbilisi**

Drive to Tbilisi via the three lakes, lunch at Tbilisi.

Afternoon visit Sameba and Holy Trinity Church, the funicular ride up Mount Mtatsminda and the National Museum of History (closed on Mondays).

Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.

### **Day 10: Tbilisi/Tsinandali/Kisiskhevi/Lagodekhi Border/Sheki**

Drive to Tsinandali where we have a tour of Chavchavadze estate.

Taste wine at Mosmieri winery and enjoy lunch.

Drive to Sheki in Azerbaijan.  
Dinner at Caravanserai.  
Overnight at a hotel in Sheki.

### **Day 11: Sheki**

Visit Sheki fortress, Khan Palace and Mosque.  
Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Sheki.

### **Day 12: Sheki/Shemakha/Baku**

Drive to Baku. Free time in afternoon to view modern Baku.  
Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Baku.

### **Day 13: Baku**

Visit Baku old town – Maiden's Tower, Palace of the Shirvan Shahs, Taza Pir Mosque; possibly also Carpet Museum, Russian Church and carpet shops.  
Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Baku.



## **Day 14: Departure**

Return flight from Baku to London Heathrow airport.

*Itinerary subject to change*

**Price £2260 per person**

### **What the price includes**

- Return flights from London Gatwick to Tbilisi and from Baku to London Heathrow.
- Accommodation in good 3\*/4\* hotels in twin bedded rooms with private facilities on half board basis. No dinner on the first night (All characteristic 4\* hotels in the centre of Tbilisi have difficult access to the hotel and customers will need to walk short distance to the hotel. Luggage will be transported in separate vehicles).
- Lunch on day 10
- Tours and transport
- Services of fully qualified English speaking guides throughout
- Entrance fees, service charges
- Gratuities for guides, drivers and hotels
- One bottle (0.5L) water per person per day
- Airport taxes
- ATOL protection\*

### **Not included in the price**

- Single supplement £637 per person
- Items of a personal nature
- Lunches except on day 10
- Drinks (except as mentioned above)
- E-visa for Azerbaijan, currently US\$20
- Travel Insurance

Please note that the cost of the tour may be subject to surcharges - please see the booking conditions. Currency exchange rates used £1 = € 1.1037 as published in the Financial Times on 29th July 2019.

\* APC (ATOL Protection Contribution) provides passenger protection via the ATTF (Air Travel Trust Fund). For further information visit [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)

## How to Book

You can either book online at [www.christian-travel.com](http://www.christian-travel.com) or by completing the attached booking form and sending it together with your deposit of £200 (full payment if within 10 weeks of departure) to:

Worldwide Christian Travel  
36 Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA

Please make cheques payable to  
'Hadler Tours Limited'

Worldwide Christian Travel  
36 Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA  
Tel: 0117 973 1840

Email: [info@christian-travel.com](mailto:info@christian-travel.com)

Website: [www.christian-travel.com](http://www.christian-travel.com)

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## General Information

### Fitness

People of all ages are welcome, but, whatever your age, we must insist on a reasonable level of fitness. A number of visits involve rough walking.

### Your protection

Hadler Tours Limited is a member of ABTA with membership numbers 93522 & V2096. ABTA and ABTA Members help holidaymakers to get the most from their travel and assist them when things do not go according to plan. We are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA's Code of Conduct. For further information about ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you if you have a complaint, contact ABTA, 30 Park Street London SE1 9EQ Tel: 020 3117 0500 or visit [www.abta.com](http://www.abta.com).

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3078. For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

### Passports, visas and vaccinations

Travellers are responsible for ensuring that they have a valid passport for travel to the relevant countries and that it is valid for at least 6 months after the date of travel. Visas are not required for British Passport holders visiting Georgia, however a visa is required for Azerbaijan. Details of how to obtain this will be emailed with your final invoice. At the

time this brochure went to press no vaccinations or inoculations are required for travel but you may wish to consult your own doctor for advice concerning this. If you have any queries regarding the above, we will be happy to help.

### Travel advice

For the latest travel advice please visit [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) or call 0870 606 0290.

### Further information and paying the balance

Further information will be sent to you regarding any action that may be required approximately 12 weeks before departure.

A final invoice will also be sent at this time and the balance for the tour must be paid at least 10 weeks before departure.

### Travel information

Full travel information, including details of meeting points, flight times, accommodation and travel information, will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks before departure. Normally, tickets are not issued but are handed to you at the airport or departure point by our representative who will be there to ensure that you depart without a hitch and to deal with any last minute difficulties.

### Travel insurance

It is compulsory to have travel insurance for your booking. Holiday Extras have a range of policies available at very competitive prices.

You can obtain a quote online by visiting [www.christian-travel.com](http://www.christian-travel.com) or alternatively you can call 0871 360 2742 and quote ABTA number 93522.

### Gratuities

These are included in the tour price and will be distributed by the tour leader.

### Room check in and check out times

The standard international practice is to let rooms from midday to midday. However times do vary. Check-in times are usually between 2pm and 3pm, check-out times between 11am and 12 noon on the day of departure. Therefore, if you check-in immediately after a night flight this would normally count as one night's accommodation. Similarly if your return flight is at night you will normally be required to vacate your room at 12 noon prior to leaving for the airport. Day rooms are subject to availability/cost and should be arranged locally with the accommodation management.

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