

## Wine and Gourmet Tour of Armenia and Georgia -13 Days

CT-06



This 13 day tour of Armenia and Georgia will provide a comprehensive introduction to the countries' gastronomic, cultural and wine-making traditions. Interspersed with demonstrations and tastings, you'll have the opportunity to visit some of the area's most important historical and religious sites, from ancient manuscript depositories to remote hilltop monasteries. Along the way, the phenomenal scenery of Armenia and Georgia's countryside will provide a photogenic backdrop as you travel over mountain passes and along winding roads that cling to the edge of steep-sided gorges. Throughout, you'll be treated like royalty by friendly locals who take pride in maintaining their centuries-old tradition of hospitality.

**DEPARTURE DATES:**

21.05.2024; 28.05.2024; 04.06.2024; 11.06.2024; 18.06.2024; 25.06.2024; 02.07.2024;  
09.07.2024; 16.07.2024; 23.07.2024; 30.07.2024; 06.08.2024; 13.08.2024; 20.08.2024;  
27.08.2024; 03.09.2024; 10.09.2024; 17.09.2024; 24.09.2024; 01.10.2024; 08.10.2024;  
15.10.2024; 22.10.2024; 29.10.2024; 05.11.2024; 12.11.2024; 19.11.2024; 26.11.2024;  
03.12.2024; 10.12.2024.

## ITINERARY

**Day 1 - Yerevan**

Touch down at Zvartnots International Airport on the outskirts of Yerevan, where you'll be met for the short transfer to your hotel.

**Day 2 - Yerevan - Echmiatsin - Zvartnots - Yerevan**

Armenia's long history has been meticulously chronicled and you'll find over 17,000 important manuscripts in the Matenadaran. After a city tour which helps give you an overview of the capital's major sights, you'll head to Maran Winery, which has been making wine for more than 200 years. There you'll learn about the processes involved from a representative of the Union of Armenian Winegrowers, with the option to taste the wine if you wish. Rounding off the day is a visit to the UNESCO-listed Armenian Catholic cathedral at Echmiadzin, possibly the oldest in the world, and to Zvartnots, where you'll tour a ruined 7th century cathedral. Breakfast and lunch included; overnight in Yerevan.

**Day 3 - Yerevan - Garni - Geghard - Yerevan**

Garni is a pagan temple which is one of the Yerevan area's more unusual religious sites, a captivating yet incongruous colonnaded Greco-Roman building. From there, you'll tour the Geghard Monastery, which forms part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site along with the nearby Azat River Gorge. Some of the churches in this religious complex were carved directly out of the hillside. While some are elaborately embellished and architecturally impressive, others are more cave-like. Nearby, you'll learn how to make traditional Armenian bread in a local house before returning to the city where you'll taste Ararat brandy, the country's leading brand. Breakfast and lunch included; overnight in Yerevan.

**Day 4 - Yerevan - Amberd - Saghmosavan - Yerevan**

Today's excursion takes us towards Armenia's highest mountain, Mount Aragats, whose peak measures up at a whopping 4096 metres above sea level. We'll set our sights on a lofty mediaeval fortification, Amberd, whose name translates as "fortress in the clouds". The earliest parts of this ancient structure date from the 7th century, though its cross-domed church is a few centuries younger. Up here, the views are remarkable, so make sure your camera battery's fully charged. Afterwards, we'll call in at ArmMas Winery, where you can taste more Armenian wines if you like. Lunch will be with a local family after they teach us how to make Armenian pasta - you'll soon see arishta's resemblance to fettuccine. Last up before we return to Yerevan is a visit to the 13th century Saghmosavank monastery which perches above the magnificent Kazakh canyon. Breakfast and lunch included; overnight in Yerevan.

**Day 5 - Yerevan - Khor Virap - Noravank - Hermon**

One of Armenia's most photogenic monasteries is Khor Virap, as it sits in front of Mount Ararat close to the Turkish border. The approach is impressive, and once there you can climb a small hill for a better view of the surrounding countryside. The arches of this complex frame the pretty church perfectly, and its subterranean well is worth a look. We'll detour to meet a village family who'll show us how to make cheese the traditional way.

Having worked up an appetite, we'll lunch on shashlik, which are grilled cubes of meat. From there, we'll continue on to Noravank following a narrow steep sided gorge until the monastery comes into view. Fabulous stone carvings adorn this church; brave the vertiginous steps up to the second storey if you dare. Finally we'll reach our hotel in the village of Hermon, where there'll be free time before settling in for the night. Breakfast and lunch included; overnight in Hermon.

### **Day 6 - Hermon - Selim Pass - Sevan - Ijevan - Yenokavan**

This morning we will drive over the Vardeniats Pass, following the route of the ancient Silk Road to a mediaeval caravanserai. Descending on the other side, we set our sights on gorgeous Lake Sevan, nicknamed "the blue pearl of Armenia". The lake stretches for almost fifty miles and we'll see Sevanavank Monastery, from where the views over the water are extraordinary. The drive along its western shore takes us to the spa town of Dilijan and on to the Ijevan wine factory. Renowned for its whites, you may wish to taste the wine and perhaps buy a bottle to take with you. Tonight, we'll stay at the Apaga Resort, a rural property with stellar views over the surrounding countryside. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included; overnight in Yenokavan.

### **Day 7 - Yenokavan - Sanahin - Haghpat - Tbilisi**

Armenia has two more remarkable monasteries up its sleeve before we head over the border into Georgia. Sanahin and Haghpat both deserve their UNESCO listing, not least for their architecturally impressive library rooms. Located along the Debed Canyon, Haghpat dates from the 9th century and has a splendid bell tower. Pay close attention inside and you'll spot holes in the floor, which were designed to store wine. Sanahin is nearby, and its name translates as "older than that one", referring to Haghpat. The floors of this cavernous church are inlaid with tombstones; some say that stepping on them brings good luck as you'll free the dead of their sins. Once we've toured both and enjoyed lunch, it will be time to drive across the border, meet our Georgian guide and continue on to Tbilisi. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included; overnight in Tbilisi.

### **Day 8 - Tbilisi**

The Georgian capital is charming, particularly its old town. One of the best places to appreciate just how attractive is from the mediaeval Methekhi church. Crossing over the River Kura, our next stop is the 4th century Narikala Fortress, located high on the cliff overlooking the city. Tbilisi looks just as appealing close up as it does from up here, so we'll wander down to have a better look. Unmissable sights abound, including the 6th century Antchiskhati basilica (the oldest surviving church in the city), Sioni cathedral which dates from the Middle Ages and the treasury of the Georgian National Museum. Rustaveli Avenue is the commercial face of the city, Tbilisi's main, modern shopping thoroughfare, so we'll check that out too. Today we have also arranged a masterclass in making Georgian Khachapuri, the country's tasty cheese-filled bread, and shashlik. The folks at Lalishvilebis Marani, a local wine cellar, offer you a glass of wine and invite you to dinner. Breakfast and dinner included; overnight in Tbilisi.

### **Day 9 - Tbilisi - Signagi - Tsinandali - Alaverdi - Telavi**

You don't have to be a wine drinker to appreciate just how pretty Georgia's winegrowing regions are, particularly on a sunny day in summer when all the vines are a vivid green. Signagi is one of the prettiest towns in the Kakheti region - actually in the whole of Georgia - and many visitors choose to walk its ancient walls for the views. Punctuated by 29 stone towers, it provides an unrivalled vantage point if you want to look out over the valley. We'll make a couple of stops once we leave Signagi, first to the Museum of Georgian Duke Alexandre Tschavtschavadze and then to Alaverdi Monastery. There are a number of wineries in Telavi, so we've laid on another tasting, though it's fine to opt out if you'd prefer to explore the town instead. Don't miss out on today's cooking class, though, as you'll be learning how to make bread and a candle-shaped Georgian sweet called tschurtschkhela. Breakfast and dinner included; overnight Telavi.

### **Day 10 - Telavi - Ananuri - Kazbegi**

Northern Georgia is mountainous and utterly beautiful. We'll set off along a major route called the Georgian Military Highway which will lead us to Ananuri. This castle complex, with turrets, crenellated walls and carvings galore, overlooks the end of the Zhinvali Reservoir. The road winds its way up past Gudauri, one of Georgia's top ski resorts. Nearby, there's a panoramic viewpoint known as the Russia-Georgia Friendship Monument, beside which you'll find vendors selling local honey. Eventually, we'll reach Kazbegi, transferring to jeeps for the final leg up to the mountaintop Gergeti Trinity Church, built in the 14th century. It's possible to hike, but the climb is a steep one, and you'll be glad you opted for four wheels as it will give you more time to soak up that awesome panorama. Back in Kazbegi, a local family will teach you how to make khinkali (twisted meat-stuffed dumplings) before we retire to our hotel for dinner. Breakfast and dinner included; overnight Kazbegi.

### **Day 11 - Kazbegi**

This delightful part of Georgia demands more than a single day. Today, we'll drive along the Sno Valley to the village of Juta, one of the highest in Europe. It's the jumping off point for hikes in the Chaukhi Mountains, whose

craggy peaks often trigger comparisons to the Italian Dolomites. We'll take a short hike so that you can see with your own eyes. Our culinary education continues with a local family who will teach us to make pkhali, a vegetable-laden dish that combines cabbage, beans, spinach and aubergines with a walnut sauce and plenty of herbs, onion and garlic. Breakfast and dinner included; overnight Kazbegi.

### Day 12 - Kazbegi - Mtskheta - Tbilisi

The drive back along the Georgian Military Highway to Tbilisi should take around 3 hours. En route we'll break the journey with a stop at Mtskheta. This was once Georgia's capital city and is now home to the UNESCO World Heritage site that encompasses the 6th century Djvari Church and the 11th century Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. Back on the road, we'll soon reach Tbilisi and settle into our city centre hotel where you will be spending your last night in Georgia. Perhaps there's time to squeeze in a visit to one of the old town's atmospheric thermal baths for a soak before dinner, which we've booked for you in a traditional restaurant that provides entertainment in the form of folk dancing or singing while you eat. Breakfast and dinner included; overnight Tbilisi.

### Day 13 - Tbilisi

Sadly, all good things must come to an end and it's time to say your farewells. We're sure Armenia and Georgia have cast their spell on you and we're confident you'll be back one day. For now, though, we'll get you to the airport in good time to make your flight.

## TOUR INCLUSIONS AND OPTIONAL EXTRAS

### Included

[International flights](#)  
[Accommodation](#)  
[Guided tours & cultural programme](#)  
[English - speaking guides](#)  
[Half board meals](#)  
[Evening entertainment](#)  
[Ground transportation](#)  
[Airport transfers](#)

### Not included

[Personal travel insurance](#)  
[Optional excursions](#)

### Practical information

[About Best of Caucasus company](#)  
[Book with confidence - covid FAQs](#)  
[How our tours are run](#)  
[Contact our travel consultants](#)

## AVAILABLE PACKAGES

### COMFORT - 3\* PACKAGE

| Dates                   | Excl. flights | Incl. flights* | Single suppl. |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 21/05/2024 - 02/06/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 28/05/2024 - 09/06/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 04/06/2024 - 16/06/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 11/06/2024 - 23/06/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 18/06/2024 - 30/06/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 25/06/2024 - 07/07/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 02/07/2024 - 14/07/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 09/07/2024 - 21/07/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 16/07/2024 - 28/07/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 23/07/2024 - 04/08/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 30/07/2024 - 11/08/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 06/08/2024 - 18/08/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 13/08/2024 - 25/08/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 20/08/2024 - 01/09/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
| 27/08/2024 - 08/09/2024 | £2695         | £3095          | £295          |
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| 26/11/2024 - 08/12/2024 | £2695 | £3095 | £295 |
| 03/12/2024 - 15/12/2024 | £2695 | £3095 | £295 |
| 10/12/2024 - 22/12/2024 | £2695 | £3095 | £295 |

### PREMIUM - 4\* PACKAGE

| Dates                   | Excl. flights | Incl. flights* | Single suppl. |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 21/05/2024 - 02/06/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 28/05/2024 - 09/06/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 04/06/2024 - 16/06/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 11/06/2024 - 23/06/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 18/06/2024 - 30/06/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 25/06/2024 - 07/07/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
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| 13/08/2024 - 25/08/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 20/08/2024 - 01/09/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
| 27/08/2024 - 08/09/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
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| 19/11/2024 - 01/12/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |
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| 10/12/2024 - 22/12/2024 | £2795         | £3195          | £395          |

### ALTERNATIVE TOURS AND TAILOR-MADE ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to organized group tours, we also offer individual trips. This could be an entirely separate holiday arrangement or an extension to a regular "Best of Caucasus" trip. Whether you would like to travel independently, or just with the group of your friends or colleagues, we can help to realise your holiday plans. Depending on your preference for either comfort or budget, we can help you to design the ideal itinerary and provide the optimal value-for-money quote. Please [contact us for a quote](#).

Based on your chosen tour we believe you might be interested in alternative trips listed below:

- > [Georgia Wine Tour - 8 days \(GE-04\)](#), Price from £1,495, 8 days
- > [Best of Armenia and Georgia - 12 days \(CT-05\)](#), Price from £2,095, 12 days
- > [Discover Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan - 16 days \(CT-02\)](#), Price from £2,895, 16 days
- > [Discover Unknown Georgia - Svaneti - 7 days \(GE-08\)](#), Price from £1,595, 7 days

### HOW TO BOOK

#### Step 1 - Choose Your Holiday & Departure Dates

It is important that you choose a trip that is well suited to your interests, capabilities and experience. All our staff has first hand experience of a range of Best of Caucasus holidays and will be happy to talk to you about your chosen trip, enabling you to assess its suitability. We also recommend that you read the descriptions of the relevant region, general information about our services, booking conditions, and trip dossiers carefully. Once you know what tour is right for you,

as well as your departure dates, you can start your booking.

## **Step 2 - Complete the Booking Form**

**Online:** log on to [www.best-of-caucasus.co.uk](http://www.best-of-caucasus.co.uk) and open the tour you wish to book and click "Book now". To provide you with a more personalised and relevant experience in all your contact with Best of Caucasus, when you book online we ask you to register on our system. Once registered you can retrieve your bookings, update newsletter subscriptions, passenger and emergency contact details, submit special dietary requests, view invoices and receipts, download trip documents.

**Email:** alternatively, you can book your tour per email - [info@best-of-caucasus.co.uk](mailto:info@best-of-caucasus.co.uk), or

**Phone:** call us on **+44 (0)20 30 51 76 40**

When booking by email or over the phone please confirm your personal details (full name and address), chosen tour, departure date, package type (hotel category), and available upgrades.

## **Step 3 - Confirmation of your booking**

On receipt of your booking form, we will make any necessary reservations for you and send you confirmation invoice, including the flight details, and additional information about your destination: advice on visas, vaccinations and what to take. The invoice will also show you the exact due date of the payment.

## **Step 4 - Payment**

Please note, if your departure date is more than 56 days you will need to pay the deposit, which should cover the full cost of the flight (if applicable), plus 10% of the land-only arrangements (minimum £100) per person towards your tour. The outstanding payment must be made 56 days prior to departure. If you book less than 56 days before departure, full payment must be made at the time of your booking. You can make your payment by bank transfer, debit or credit card, cheque, bankers draft or postal order. You will find all relevant payment details in your invoice.

