



Be our guest in Georgia

"Come in, genatsvale, you will be our guest!" - you will often hear these welcoming words on the course of our combined ethnographic and environmental tour across the country of high mountains, deep valleys, unruly rivers, thousand-year history and the most hospitable people! Immerse yourself in the lives of ordinary mountaineers, try saturated scents of house wine, take part in the process of Chacha-making, and acquaint yourselves with rich and organic Georgian cuisine! To comprehend the incomprehensible in nine days?! It is possible! Welcome to Georgia!

Day 1. Arrival to Georgia
Day 2. Tour: Tbilisi sightseeng tour
Day 3. Tour: Tbilisi - Mtskheta - Terjola - Kutaisi
Day 4. Tour: Kutaisi - Ropeway to Hatsvali - Mestia
Day 5. Tour: Mestia - Ushguli - Mestia
Day 6. Tour: Mestia - Zugdidi - Borjomi - Bakuriani
Day 7. Tour: Bakuriani - Surami - Telavi
Day 8. Tour: Telavi - Signaghi - Tbilisi
Day 9. Farewell to Georgia

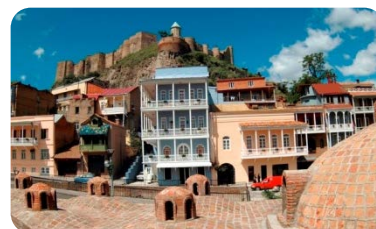
Durat.: 9 days/ 8 nights;
Distance: 2200 KM
Overnight cities:
Tbilisi – 3 nights
Kutaisi – 1 night
Mestia – 2 nights
Bakuriani – 1 night
Telavi – 1 night

Day 1. Arrival in Georgia

Arrival to Tbilisi. Meeting at the airport, transfers and hotel accommodation. Free evening for the first meeting with Georgia and Georgians.

Day 2. Tour: Tbilisi sightseeing tour

After breakfast - a walk in Tbilisi, accompanied by our guide. The old town still holds a unique identity, remaining a symbol of tolerance, multi-ethnicity and symbiosis of different cultures. Cobblestone-paved streets will lead you to a district of sulfur baths famous for their healing properties.



Passing along colorful houses with carved balconies you come to where urban life has been in full swing for a century and half now. All this time the quiet life of the good people of Tbilisi has been guarded by formidable Narikala fortress that once presented a single complex with walls and towers encircling the city. All the variety of eclectic architecture of Tbilisi from ancient basilica of Anchiskhati to modern Sameba cathedral - "champion" both in size and richness of decoration will be unfolded before your eyes.

One of the most picturesque places of the Georgian capital - "flea market" under the Dry Bridge - keeps the memory of several generations. Varied antique items, antique porcelain, books and vinyl records are sold alongside a real open air gallery. In a cozy square one can buy works by Georgian artists, colourful gifts and jewelry made using famous cloisonne technique. You can learn more about this technique in specialized shops.

We suggest you to consolidate experiences of a busy day by visiting the famous "Sarajishvili" plant. There you will try brandy produced in accordance with traditions established back in 1884. This tasting will serve as an aperitif before a dinner at a family restaurant where you can expect house wines from different parts of Georgia and rich national cuisine.

Day 3. Tour: Tbilisi - Signagi - Gurdjaani - Telavi – Tbilisi

The ancient capital of Georgia - Mtskheta changed this title back in the V century to the status of a religious center, becoming "Georgian Jerusalem". Its monuments are on the UNESCO World Heritage List. When seeing the Jvari Church one will not question reasons behind this monument of the VI century being recognized as a masterpiece of world architecture. He stands on top of the mountain, which offers stunning views of the confluence of the Rivers Mtkvari and Aragvi, surroundings of Mtskheta and peaks of the Greater Caucasus. The next stop is Svetitskhoveli Cathedral of Mtskheta. Richly decorated cathedral of the XI century is not just a symbol of the Golden Age of Georgia. The history of its construction is associated with many legends. Walls of the Cathedral guard not one sacred relic, the most important of which - the tunic of the Christ - is buried at the foundation of the Cathedral.

Visiting a house wine cellar in the village of Chardakhi will let you come close to understanding of traditions and secrets of ancient Georgian wine-making. And, tasting of a wine from the cellar of the host will ensure your good mood for the rest of a long driveway to Kutaisi. The road will be remembered for its rapidly changing landscapes and beautiful views of the Rikoti pass. The second largest city of Georgia is waiting for you to envelop you with a peaceful atmosphere and special flavor during your walk through its old quarters.

The Gelati monastery complex is located in the outskirts of Kutaisi. Once, inside of its walls housed an academy, which for long had been the main cultural and intellectual centre of the entire region. The fame of the Gelati Academy founded in 1106 reached even distant lands. Scholars of Europe were eager to visit the Monastery which was known as "second Athens" at the time. Mosaics of the cathedral church of Gelati are considered the finest in the entire Caucasus. The complex itself is also listed as a World Heritage Site.

Wine tasting in the town of Terjola, at the winery "Khareba". This is a great chance to summarize the experience of the day in a toast with a glass of the noble drink. Following this, simple, but incredibly tasty homemade meal awaits you at a family guesthouse in Kutaisi: fried chicken and Imeretian khachapuri made from home-made cheese with fresh fruit compote.



Day 4. Tour: Tbilisi - Gori - Uplistsikhe - Sataplia - Kutaisi

"A land of thousand towers" - a real fairy tale, shrouded in legends, ancient superstitions and strict customs, and so unlike all other regions of Georgia. Because of its incredible character this region has fast become a real tourist discovery for the world. So, we are off to Svaneti - proud, unruly, and the most inaccessible, and thus, so alluring part of mountainous Georgia!

First, a dizzying serpentine road leads to hydroelectric power station on the River Enguri. Views unfolding from the height of 270 - meter dam are breathtaking. Feeling of total immersion in the riches of the nature will not leave you until the very end of the journey!

The administrative centre of Svaneti – the town of Mestia. Walks and visits to local places of interest - famous Svan towers that to this day hold many secrets from pagan times. We will have journey by ropeway to Hatsvali Mountain and make beautiful photos. Once placed in the home-style hotel you can take part in traditional rituals of Svaneti and taste local cuisine made from local organic products.

Day 5. Tour: Mestia - Ushguli – Mestia

Leaving behind the heights of Svaneti, you go to central Georgia. But first, one should give proper try to Megrelian dishes that with its abundance of spices and culinary ingenuity, differs the rest spicy and varied Georgian cuisine. This will be done in the administrative center of Samegrelo - the city of Zugdidi.



Here comes a small announcement. First of all, at the table "Gomi" - a thick porridge made from corn flour with melted local cheese "suluguni" tucked inside, awaits you. Meat dishes are filled with spicy sauce "adjika" and sit alongside vegetable salads made of products grown in local orchards. Organic, natural products, homely atmosphere and friendly welcome ... Bon appetit, genatsvale!

Not so short drive to the village of Shrosha will help digest the delicious lunch. Here you will visit a pottery workshop. An owner will tell you about basic directions in the Georgian ceramics, show you his studio and his riches: "kvevri" - amphora for making and storing wine, "doki" - jugs for wine and water, various ceramic dishes for Georgian feast "supra". But most importantly - you will be able to try your hand at the art of pottery-making!

The next stop will be the famous spa resort of Borjomi that we will reach passing through the picturesque gorge. Walk in the park, which flows seamlessly into Europe's largest nature reserve, will be crowned with tasting of famous mineral water "Borjomi" that wells out here directly of the ground. Then we go to spend a night in the popular winter resort of Bakuriani. In warmer months, you can immerse yourself in the beauty of the mountains covered with pine forests. However, the village will surprise you not just with the beauty of the surrounding landscape. Have you ever heard of a jam made from pine cones? You will be able to try this healing miracle with a taste of wood resin in Bakuriani!

Day 6. Tour: Mestia - Zugdidi - Borjomi – Bakuriani

Leaving behind the heights of Svaneti, you go to central Georgia. But first, one should give proper try to Megrelian dishes that with its abundance of spices and culinary ingenuity, differs the rest spicy and varied Georgian cuisine. This will be done in the administrative center of Samegrelo - the city of Zugdidi.



Here comes a small announcement. First of all, at the table "Gomi" - a thick porridge made from corn flour with melted local cheese "suluguni" tucked inside, awaits you. Meat dishes are filled with spicy sauce "adjika" and sit alongside vegetable salads made of products grown in local orchards. Organic, natural products, homely atmosphere and friendly welcome ... Bon appetit, genatsvale!

Not so short drive to the village of Shrosha will help digest the delicious lunch. Here you will visit a pottery workshop. An owner will tell you about basic directions in the Georgian ceramics, show you his studio and his riches: "kvevri" - amphora for making and storing wine, "doki" - jugs for wine and water, various ceramic dishes for Georgian feast "supra". But most importantly - you will be able to try your hand at the art of pottery-making!



The next stop will be the famous spa resort of Borjomi that we will reach passing through the picturesque gorge. Walk in the park, which flows seamlessly into Europe's largest nature reserve, will be crowned with tasting of famous mineral water "Borjomi" that wells out here directly of the ground. Then we go to spend a night in the popular winter resort of Bakuriani. In warmer months, you can immerse yourself in the beauty of the mountains covered with pine forests. However, the village will surprise you not just with the beauty of the surrounding landscape. Have you ever heard of a jam made from pine cones? You will be able to try this healing miracle with a taste of wood resin in Bakuriani!

Day 7. Tour: Bakuriani - Surami - Telavi

The settlement of Surami is a geographical centre of Georgia. It is here that the main roads between eastern and western parts of the country cross. At the roadside, residents are selling local culinary specialty - sweet and spicy flour product "nazuki". Ruins of Surami Fortress tower above the rock - the fortress that is associated with a dramatic legend - a dark and romantic history which has become a plot for many theater and film productions.

The tour now takes us to the most eastern region of the country. Kakheti is famous for its fertile Alazani valley that is home to a quarter of all the vineyards of Georgia. The picturesque village of Tsinandali became the first place in the country where modern and European techniques and technologies were used to produce Georgian wine. Here we will visit the house - museum of famous public figure, Prince Alexander Chavchavadze, will see his art salon and try famed wine "Tsinandali".

But this is not the end of the wine program of the day! It will continue in Napareuli village on the other side of the fertile valley. To get there, we will cross the river Alazani to which this land owes its wonderful fertile qualities. An unforgettable dinner awaits you in the old wine cellar "Twins" and you will be immediately involved in preparations for a feast ... you will bake bread "shoti" in a genuine Georgian furnace "tone", you will grill shashliks "mtsvadi" and even take your part in distilling of home-made vodka "chacha"! When the time comes to sleep, we guarantee you a pleasant good night's sleep!

Day 8. Tour: Telavi - Signagi - Tbilisi

A morning walk across the main city of Kakheti - Telavi will be remembered for its striking architecture of old buildings, even brighter and colorful bazaar and wealth of patterns in the house of traditionally-woven carpets. Come long, we still have surprises for you ahead!

The Alaverdi Monastery of the Middle Ages - the highest of all the ancient churches of Georgia - whitens at the foot of the Caucasus. But we are here not just for the magnificent scenery and perfect architectural forms. The wine cellar of Alaverdi Cathedral has become the hearth of Georgian wine culture. Archaeologists have found there around 50 amphoras "kvevri" that date back to the VII-XI centuries. And this ancient winery is restored! Monastery wine has a distinctive velvety taste, fragrant aroma and medicinal properties. In addition, you will be offered honey from the monastery apiary and vodka made from this honey. Bottoms up, after all, this toast is to your health!

"The city of Love" - Signagi will be our next stop. Walk through the narrow picturesque streets of the fortress-town, which looks as though suspended in the air and proudly offers guests a wonderful view of the vast cradle of Georgian wine-making - fertile Alazani Valley. Here you can capture a panorama for depiction of which artists from different countries come to Signagi.

Here, we bid farewell to Kakheti and go back to Tbilisi, where a gala dinner at the ethnographic restaurant with Georgian dances and folk songs awaits you.



Day 9. Farewell to Georgia

Time before departure can be devoted to shopping in hypermarket "Goodwill" and "flea market" at the Dry Bridge. Do not miss the opportunity to go to Tbilisi sulfur baths to explore the centuries-old tradition of Georgian bath-house attendants "mekise". Dear guests, have you had enough of your hosts yet? The answer is obvious! You have just started to get acquainted with Georgia in all its diversity, and we are confident, we will see you again!

