



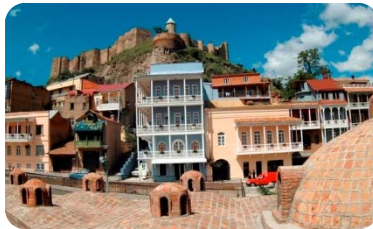
## Kakheti Wine Trail

"Blessed" - this is how Georgians - with awe, bred for thousands of years - call wine. Culture of wine-growing and winemaking are fundamental basis of identity of this people. No wonder! After all, it was proved that Georgia is indeed the birthplace of wine! It was here that the first wine-growing attempts were made and the process of its fermentation was mastered. Genes of Georgian vines can be traced in DNA of different grape varieties worldwide. It is the Georgian word "Gvino" that is at the root of all words that denote this noble drink. But even in Georgia, there are places that stand out with its wine tradition. We'll go to Kakheti - the main wine producing centre of the country!

Day 1. Tour: Tbilisi - Signagi  
Day 2. Tour: Signaghi – Telavi  
Day 3. Tour: Telavi – Tbilisi

Duration: 3 days / 2 nights  
Distance: 350 kilometers  
Stay: Signagi – 1 night  
Telavi - 1 night

Do you want to try not only the best brands of Georgian wine, but a wine with truly ancient history and traditions? Do you want to learn about the unique technology of Georgian wine-making that has received the status of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from the UNESCO? Do you want to compare the results of the ancient winemaking innovations and experiments of modern winemakers? Then you need to follow us on the wine trail to the area where a quarter of all the Georgian vineyards are concentrated!



This journey starts in Tbilisi, where the plant of sparkling wine "Bagrati" and cognac plant "Sarajishvili" are situated. Tours and tastings at the enterprises with two centuries-old history will prepare you to dive into the wine world of Kakheti. Let's go!

The small town looks as though it is attached to the mountain top; it impresses us with its special charm and carries a visitor into the past by 200 years. The town is encircled with the longest in Georgia castle wall and streets of Signagi are adorned with statues created in the image of paintings of Niko Pirosmiani. Original works of this great Georgian self-taught artist can be viewed in the local ethnographic museum. It is located near the wine house "Pheasant's Tears", where traditions of Kakhetian winemaking are cherished and preserved, where they are constantly in search for "pure taste" of a wine and categorically refuse to mix different varieties of grapes!

At the "Pheasant's Tears" you will be able to see real Georgian "Marani" - a traditional wine cellar, where you will learn about "Kvevri" - a special clay vessel for aging of a vine that requires a special care. You will see other instruments and tools which for centuries have been used by Georgians to work with the juice of the sacred vine. Qualified staff will provide you with a professional wine-tasting session, after which it will be pleasant to take a little walk.



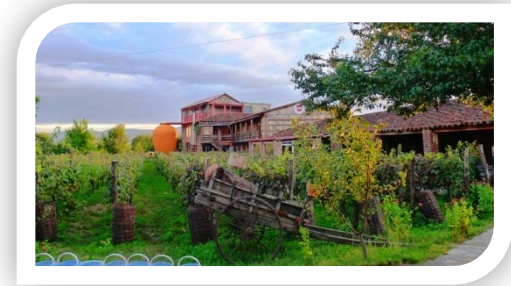
### Day 1. Tour: Tbilisi - Signagi

Saperavi, Rkatsiteli, Mtsvane, Mukuzani, Kindzmarauli and many other famous wines, multiple winners of international competitions, are named after the villages of Kakheti, micro zones or varieties of wines growing here (and only here!). That is why a trip to Kakheti while reading roadside signs is reminiscent of a journey through the wine list of a respectable restaurant. And at the end of this road is the fortress town of Signagi which looks as if suspended in the air.



From a top of the towers of Signaghi stunning views of the cradle of Georgian winemaking are opened. Fertile Alazani valley stretches under the walls of the town in all its splendor, and imposing mountains of the Great Caucasus are rising above right behind it. Having enjoyed the panorama, you can proceed to something very tempting. The crowing end of the day will be a traditional feast - "supra" with great wine and delicious national dishes, which will be accompanied with famous Georgian polyphonic singing!

Today we will visit the house - museum of a person who was the first among Georgians who understood that even though Georgians may well have taught the world to drink wine still there was no end to perfection and adopting successful techniques of winemaking was worth a try! Tsinandali is an ancestral home of Prince Chavchavadze. It was here that for the first time in Georgia wine was produced using modern technological methods. Here, famous Georgian poet, Prince Aleksandr Chavchavadze produced Georgian wine using French methods for the first time. Here in the XVIII-XIX centuries a fashionable salon where aristocrats from different countries gathered lived a stormy life. Alexander Dumas once compared Tsinandali to a paradise, while the Romanovs made the mansion their residence, and today you can walk around the estate in the footsteps of the famous poet and members of the Russian imperial family!



Meanwhile, the wine trail runs forward into the village of Kisiskhevi, the plant of the winery "Vinoterra". You will be shown vineyards of the winery and another tasting-aperitif will be arranged before a dinner in a restaurant with great views of the Caucasus range. Brave yourself - there are wineries "Telavi Marani" and "Badagoni" in Telavi waiting for you. After that you will be welcomed as guests in the home of a Kakhetian family and will become participants of yet another feast led by a colorful toastmaster. This time you will become thoroughly familiar with the rules and order of the "supra", you will taste new Georgian dishes, in other words, you will taste the diversity of Georgian hospitality to the full!

A walk through the main city of Kakheti cannot be done without visiting a local market in Telavi. Traditional sweets "Churchkhela" and "Tkldapi", as well as dried fruit, honey, plenty of herbs and spices for a variety of culinary experiences ... It is a real eastern bazaar, where you can (and should !) haggle. Georgians will give you a discount for everything that you are interested in - but first show respect for the ancient art of trade and prove that you deserve a good price!

Meanwhile, the wine trail continues. The next stage of encounter with the Georgian wine awaits you at the plant of "Saperavi". Each company strives to show guests the best of its production. And immediately after the modern enterprise we will go back to the origins of winemaking in a medieval monastery of Alaverdi.

The cathedral itself is one of the main cultural attractions of Georgia. A magnificent building on the backdrop of majestic mountains is also interesting as a hearth of traditional culture. Alaverdi monks have long been famous as finest winemakers. The wine from the cellar of the Monastery was appreciated also for its healing properties. After excavations this cellar has been restored and now continues to delight wine lovers. Thick, aromatic, fragrant wine is not available to everyone, but for us the holy fathers will make an exception!

Fine wine needs no less than perfect food to go along, and we know where we can find it! Restaurant "Shuamta" is in the shade of the thick forest, hidden among the silence and solitude of the nature. Local chefs are ready to withstand the test. You are already familiar with Georgian cuisine in general and now you can discover its new facets before returning to Tbilisi traveling through the picturesque Gombori pass. And the light of the setting sun will lead you along the descending mountain road to the Georgian capital...

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