

CAUCASUS ADVENTURE

AZERBAIJAN - GEORGIA - ARMENIA

September 5 - 15, 2024 • 11 Days - 9 Nights





Caucasus Adventure
September 5-15, 2024
11 Days / 9 Nights

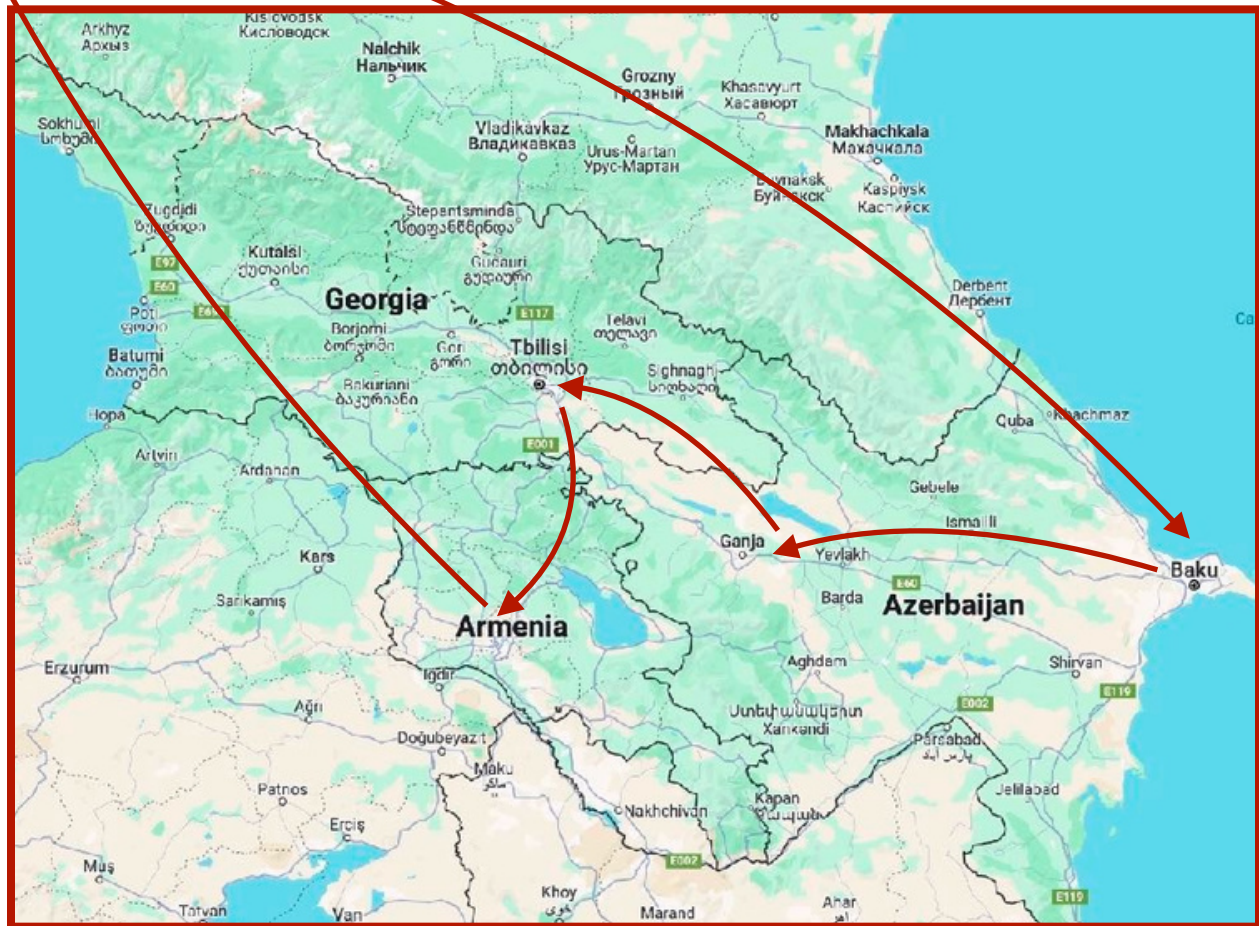
ITINERARY

DAY 1	Leave Houston for Baku, Azerbaijan
DAY 2	Arrival in Baku / Baku - Azerbaijan
DAY 3	Baku sightseeing / Baku - Azerbaijan
DAY 4	Drive to Ganja - sightseeing / Ganja - Azerbaijan
DAY 5	Drive to Tbilisi / Tbilisi - Georgia
DAY 6	Tbilisi sightseeing / Tbilisi - Georgia
DAY 7	Excursion to Mtskheta & Gori / Tbilisi - Georgia
DAY 8	Drive to Yerevan with sightseeing / Yerevan - Armenia
DAY 9	Yerevan sightseeing / Yerevan - Armenia
DAY 10	Excursion to Etchmiadzin & Garni / Yerevan - Armenia
DAY 11	Departure



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MAP TRAJECTORY





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HIGHLIGHTS

- Old City of Baku**
- Atashgah: Zoroastrian Fire Temple**
- Historic city of Ganja**
- Historic Tbilisi**
- Georgian wine tasting**
- Mtskheta: Ancient capital of Georgia**
- Gori: Birthplace of Stalin**
- Local music and dance show**
- Historic Yerevan**
- Armenian brandy tasting**
- Temple of Garni**
- Holy Etchmiadzin**
- Matenadaran; Museum of manuscripts**
- Haghpat & Sevanavank Monasteries**



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INCLUDED

9 Nights' Accommodation at stated hotels or similar.
Breakfast, lunch and dinner as indicated in the itinerary.
Transfers - for travelers on suggested flights.
Sightseeing, excursions and drives as indicated in the itinerary; related entry fees.
Professional English speaking guides throughout the tour.
Two small bottles of water per person every day on the bus.
Porterage at the hotels.

NOT INCLUDED

International airfare.
Visa fees.
Drinks with included meals, except drinking water for meals and tea or coffee for breakfast.
Gratuities for guides and drivers.
Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.
Travel insurance.



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SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on Lufthansa:

05 Sep Houston to Frankfurt

LH 441 dep: 3:35 pm / arr: 8:15 am on 06 Sep

06 Sep Frankfurt to Baku

LH 612 dep: 2:00 pm / arr: 8:50 pm

15 Sep Yerevan to Vienna

LH 6375 dep: 4:45 am / arr: 6:30 am

15 Sep Vienna to Frankfurt

LH 6327 dep: 7:00 am / arr: 8:30 am

15 Sep Frankfurt to Houston

LH 440 dep: 10:00 am / arr: 1:35 pm

Economy class: \$1,840

Premium Economy: \$4,450

Business class: \$8,388

per person, including taxes, surcharges and fees as of Feb 26, 2024. Fares may change based on availability.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Hilton Baku Hotel

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/gydnhbi-hilton-baku/>



Vego Hotel - Ganja

<https://www.vegohotel.com/home.html>



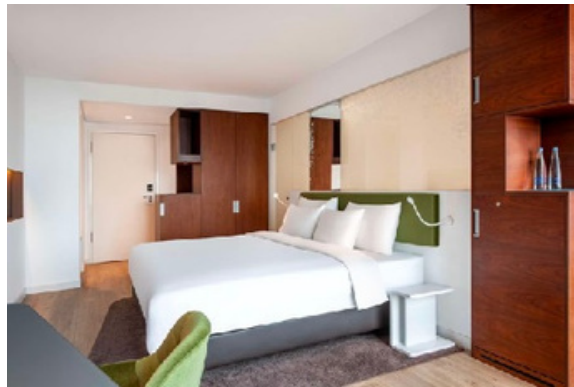


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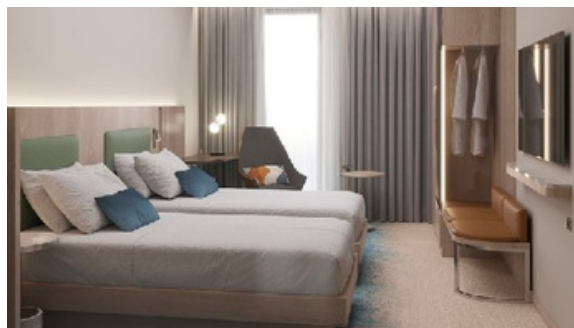
Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel - Tbilisi

<https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-tbilisi>



Courtyard by Marriott - Yerevan

<https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/evncy-courtyard-yerevan/overview/>





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PROGRAM DETAILS

DAY 1	Thu, Sep 5 - Houston-Baku, Azerbaijan
	We will leave Houston for Baku, Azerbaijan.

DAY 2	Fri, Sep 6 - Baku Arrival
	Upon arrival, we will meet our guide at the airport and we will be transferred to our hotel in Baku.
	Overnight in BakuMeals: -

Nestled on the crossroads of Europe and Asia, **Baku**, the capital of Azerbaijan, emerges as a modern metropolis with a captivating blend of history and innovation. Its skyline is an architectural marvel, where futuristic skyscrapers harmoniously coexist with the ancient charm of the UNESCO-listed Old City. Baku's seaside promenade, the Boulevard, offers breathtaking views of the Caspian Sea, inviting residents and visitors alike to stroll along its vibrant expanse. The city's cultural mosaic is reflected in its museums, galleries, and performance spaces that showcase Azerbaijan's rich heritage. From the Flame Towers illuminating the night sky to the time-honored flavors of Azerbaijani cuisine, Baku paints a compelling portrait of a city that embraces its past while forging a dynamic future.



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DAY 3

Sat, Sep 7 - Baku

We will have a full day sightseeing program in Baku, including the Old City, Palace of the Shirvanshahs, Maiden Tower, Qosha Qala Qapisi, Haydar Aliyev Center, Atashgah Zoroastrian fire Temple and the National Museum of History.

Overnight in Baku Meals: B-L-D

Baku's Old City, known locally as "Icherisheher," is a captivating time capsule that transports visitors to the heart of Azerbaijan's storied past. Encircled by ancient fortress walls, this UNESCO World Heritage site holds within its labyrinthine streets a treasure trove of historical and architectural wonders. Cobblestone pathways wind past intricately carved stone buildings, charming mosques, and centuries-old palaces. Each step through its narrow alleys reveals glimpses of the city's rich heritage, from the imposing Maiden Tower, a symbol of resilience, to the elegant Shirvanshah's Palace, a showcase of medieval craftsmanship. With its vibrant blend of culture, history, and authenticity, Baku's Old City invites exploration and promises an immersive journey into the soul of Azerbaijan's capital.

The **Haydar Aliyev Center** in Baku stands as an architectural masterpiece that defies convention and redefines space. Designed by the visionary architect Zaha Hadid, this iconic structure transcends traditional geometries with its fluid and undulating form.

The building's smooth curves create a sense of continuous movement, blurring the lines between interior and exterior. Inside, the space is equally awe-inspiring, with its vast, column-free halls inviting a sense of boundless exploration. The center serves as a hub for cultural exchange, hosting a diverse range of events from exhibitions to performances. With its bold design and limitless possibilities, the Haydar Aliyev Center stands as a symbol of Baku's contemporary spirit and its embrace of innovation and creativity.



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DAY 4

Sun, Sep 8 - Baku - Ganja

In the morning we will leave Baku and drive to Ganja, visiting Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape Reserve on the way.

Upon arrival we will continue with sightseeing in Ganja, including Nizami Mausoleum, Bottle House, Ganja Central Park, Shah Abbas Mosque & caravanserai, Javad Han Street and Imamzade.

Overnight in GanjaMeals: B-L-D

Ganja, one of Azerbaijan's oldest cities, holds a storied past dating back over 2,500 years. Nestled along the ancient Silk Road, Ganja served as a significant trade hub, fostering cultural exchange and economic prosperity.

Throughout its history, the city endured various conquests, including Persian, Arab, Mongol, and Russian rule, each leaving an indelible mark on its cultural fabric. Renowned for its contributions to literature and science, Ganja was the birthplace of the iconic poet Nizami Ganjavi, adding to its legacy as a center for art and scholarship.

Its historical significance, reflected in architectural marvels like the Nizami Mausoleum and the remnants of ancient fortifications, stands as a testament to Ganja's enduring place in Azerbaijani history.



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DAY 5

Mon, Sep 9 - Ganja - Tbilisi, Georgia

In the morning leave Ganja for Georgian border.

We will cross the land border and meet with our Georgian guide & driver. Then we will drive to Tbilisi.

Rest of the day at leisure in Tbilisi.

Overnight in Tbilisi Meals: B-L-D

Here myth and history, culture and traditions, diverse nature and hospitable people, all intermingle with one another. A blend of cultures, a smell of spices, different nations meeting on street corners, different faiths sharing the same courtyards....This is **Tbilisi**, the city that has been dominated by traders, warriors, tyrants and dictators in turn. Take a walk around the old town and breathe in the living past.

Today Tbilisi is a modern city with well-known museums and theaters, art galleries, churches and archaeological excavations, sulphur bathhouses, narrow streets with inner courts, surrounded with balconies decorated with laces, which overhang over abysses.



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DAY 6

Tue, Sep 10 - Tbilisi

Our day in Tbilisi will start with an orientation tour, visiting the important structures of the past: Metekhi Church of Assumption (13th c) built by the king Demetre II. Resting upon the top of the hill, the church is a good example of cross-domed Georgian orthodox churches.

Georgian Synagogue from late 19th c.; Sioni Cathedral (6th-19th cc.) which was the seat of the ruling Catholicos-Patriarchs and is commonly referred to as the “Tbilisi Sioni”, following an old Georgian custom of naming churches after places in the Holy Land.

Anchiskhati Basilica (6th c.) – the oldest surviving church in Tbilisi and Narikhala Fortress - the main citadel of the city where we can enjoy the wonderful views of the city.

After a wine tasting session in a local cellar founded by eight Georgian wineries, we will have our lunch.

Our program in the afternoon will include Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral, the main Cathedral of the Georgian Orthodox Church constructed between 1995 and 2004. Holy Trinity Cathedral is the third-tallest Eastern Orthodox cathedral in the world.

We will finish our city tour visiting the National Museum of Georgia where we can enjoy the permanent exhibition ‘The Archaeological Treasury.’

We will have a special welcome dinner at local restaurant with local music.

Overnight in Tbilisi Meals: B-L-D



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DAY 7

Wed, Sep 11 - Gori - Mtskheta - Tbilisi

Today, we will have a full day excursion to Gori and Mtskheta.

In the morning we will drive to Gori, which serves as the capital of Shida Kartli region.

Gori was an important military stronghold in the Middle Ages and maintains a strategic importance due to its location on the principal highway connecting eastern and western parts of Georgia. In the course of its history, Gori has been invaded by the armies of regional powers several times. The city was occupied by Russian troops during the 2008 Russia–Georgia war.

Gori is also known as the birthplace of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

In Gori, we will visit Stalin Museum, where we can see the house where Stalin was born and his personal railway carriage.

The green Pullman carriage, which is armor plated and weighs 83 tons, was used by Stalin from 1941 onwards, including his attendances at the Yalta Conference and the Tehran Conference.

Then we will drive to Chateau Mukhrani vineyard, to visit the wine cellars and taste their local wine.

Château Mukhrani was founded 1878 by the Prince of Mukhrani, heir of the royal family of Georgia. Abandoned during the former Soviet Union, the castle and domain was completely renewed in 2003.

After lunch we will drive to Mtskheta - the ancient capital of Georgia, located at the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers.

Here we will visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites:
Jvari, the 6th century cross-shaped monastery built on the top of a cliff, overlooking the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers. At this place St. Nino, a female evangelist, erected a large wooden cross on the site of a pagan temple;
Svetitskhoveli, the fortified cathedral dating from the 11th century. Svetitskhoveli is a sacred place where the Robe of Christ is buried.

Drive back to Tbilisi early in the evening. We will be on our own for dinner.

Overnight in Tbilisi

Meals: B-L



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DAY 8

Thu, Sep 12 - Tbilisi - Yerevan, Armenia

In the morning we will leave Tbilisi and drive to Armenian border. After crossing the border our Armenian guide and bus will meet us and we will continue to Yerevan.

On the way we will visit Haghpat and Sevanavank Monasteries.

Lunch is included on the way.

Overnight in Yerevan

Meals: B-L-D

Haghpat Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage site nestled in the lush Lori Province of Armenia, stands as a masterpiece of medieval Armenian architecture. Founded in the 10th century, this spiritual sanctuary boasts a stunning ensemble of religious structures, including churches, chapels, and intricate stone carvings. Perched majestically atop a verdant hillside overlooking the Debed River Canyon, Haghpat Monastery exudes an aura of tranquility and spiritual reverence.

Sevanavank Monastery, perched on the serene shores of Lake Sevan, is a jewel of Armenian religious and cultural heritage. Dating back to the 9th century, this monastic complex comprises two beautifully preserved churches, Surb Arakelots and Surb Astvatsatsin, offering breathtaking vistas of the azure lake and the surrounding mountains. The monastery's secluded setting and its spiritual ambiance make it a cherished destination for pilgrims and travelers alike.



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DAY 9

Fri, Sep 13 - Yerevan

The day starts with a visit to History Museum housed by Yerevan City Hall. Providing an excellent introduction to the history of the city, the museum is an ideal place to explore Yerevan, new and old.

We will continue our day with Matenadaran, one of the world's oldest repositories of Greek, Persian and Arabic manuscripts, Mother Armenia monument, Genocide Memorial situated on the hills overlooking the city, a solemn reminder of the first genocide of the 20th century.

After lunch we will continue with a walking tour exploring various layers of history – medieval shrines hidden behind imposing Soviet-style façades, narrow streets of the old center with sunlight playing on its pink walls, Covered Market and Blue Mosque on Mashtots Avenue, Republic Square, Opera House, Cascade and spacious Grigor Lusavorich Cathedral.

We will also visit a brandy distiller to taste famous Armenian brandy.

Overnight in Yerevan Meals: B-L-D

Yerevan, Armenia's vibrant capital, captivates visitors with its blend of ancient history and modern allure.

Nestled against the backdrop of Mount Ararat, the city boasts a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, reflected in landmarks like the grand Republic Square and the iconic Cascade complex. Yerevan's bustling streets host a mix of traditional markets, trendy cafes, and a burgeoning art scene, inviting exploration and immersion into its lively atmosphere.

The city's deep-rooted history is showcased in museums like the Matenadaran, housing ancient manuscripts, while its bustling nightlife and culinary delights reflect a contemporary and dynamic urban landscape.

Yerevan's unique charm lies in its ability to seamlessly blend its past and present, offering visitors an unforgettable experience that captures the essence of Armenian culture and hospitality.



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DAY 10

Sat, Sep 14 - Garni - Etchmiadzin - Yerevan

Today we will have a full day excursion outside Yerevan.

In the morning we will drive east to the magnificent Temple of the Sun at Garni and the legendary Monastery of Spear at Geghard. We will explore the mosaic ancient baths and ruins of the royal palace, immerse ourselves in the atmosphere of this mythical place and examine remarkable cross stones carved into sheer rock.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we continue our exploration of the treasures of Armenia with a visit to the Vatican city of Armenia, Holy Etchmiadzin. Experience a fascinating journey through time, descend to the ruins of the pagan sanctuary beneath the altar and pay tribute to the Treasury of Mother Cathedral with striking collection of relics of Christianity.

Then to Zvartnots, a temple consecrated in the presence of Emperor Constantine of Byzantium, it stands out as one of the most prominent creations of medieval architecture.

Return to Yerevan late afternoon.

Overnight in Yerevan

Meals: B-L-D

Etchmiadzin, the spiritual heart of Armenia, holds profound significance as the country's religious center. Home to the Mother Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, one of the world's oldest churches, this UNESCO World Heritage site stands as a testament to Armenia's early adoption of Christianity in the 4th century.

The cathedral, surrounded by other religious buildings and museums, exudes architectural grandeur and spiritual reverence, drawing pilgrims and tourists alike. Beyond its historical and religious importance, Etchmiadzin offers a glimpse into Armenian culture, art, and tradition, making it a revered destination that encapsulates the essence of the country's spiritual and historical identity.



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DAY 11

Sun, Sep 15 - Departure

Very early in the morning, we will be transferred to the airport for our return flight.

Contact Us

travel@wachouston.org

713-522-7811

www.wachouston.org