

# Georgia Tour *The Pearl of the Caucasus*

**31 AUGUST – 13 SEPTEMBER**

A destination that will be an unforgettable discovery for its fascinating sites, breathtaking views, excellent cuisine and wines and which will remain in our hearts

## **31 August: ROMA - TBILISI**

Meeting at Fiumicino Airport at 5.15 a.m. at the check-in desk of our flight, handling of boarding formalities and departure at 7.10 with **TURKISH AIRWAYS** scheduled flights, with stopover and change of aircraft in Istanbul (TK1362 and TK382 - flight duration 5h 0'). Arrival in Tbilisi at 16.30 local time, handling of border formalities and transfer to the **Museum Hotel** (4 \* sup.). **Dinner in a traditional restaurant** and overnight at the hotel.

## **1° September: GUIDED TOUR OF TBILISI**



Breakfast at the hotel and day entirely dedicated to visiting Tbilisi, the beautiful capital of Georgia. We will visit both the **Old Town** and the **New Town** with a great variety of curiosities, many of which are very ancient. We start from **Old Tbilisi** - nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** - with the **Cathedral of Sioni** (7th century) and then go up the hill to visit the **Narikala Fortress** (4th century), one of the oldest fortifications in the city. Afterwards, we arrive at the **Sulphurous Baths** with the domes built with bricks.

Stop for **lunch in a restaurant**, and after a walk along **Corso Rustaveli**, with a visit to the **Church of St. Nicolas** and the **Trinity Cathedral**. We will see the **Bridge of Peace**, **Meidan Bazar** and **Mtatsminda Park**. Finally, we visit the very interesting **National Historical Museum**, with perfectly preserved artifacts and its exclusive treasure that will assure us that Georgia is truly the **Homeland of the Golden Fleece**.

**Dinner in a characteristic restaurant** and overnight at the hotel.



## **2 September: TBILISI - CACHEZIA Wine Region - ALAVERDI - TSINANDALI - TBILISI**



After breakfast, we start the tour in Georgia by going to the nearby region of **Cachezia**, a historic province where the **Georgian wine** was born 8,000 years ago, whose **winemaking method** is now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. During the day there will be a visit to an old cellar, where we will be shown the processing and where we can taste good wine too.

You cross fertile fields and large vineyards with a first stop at the **Alaverdi Monastery**, one of the largest in Georgia, with the splendid **Cathedral of St. George** (11th century), now a **UNESCO World Heritage candidate**.

In the town you can also stop under an immense 900-year-old plane tree.

We continue to **Tsinandali** where we visit the **House-Museum of Alexander Chavchavadze**, a famous Georgian poet (19th century) who was the first to use European technology for winemaking. The Museum is surrounded by a beautiful English garden and has a **Cellar that collects 16,500 bottles of wine**, with the oldest dating back to 1814. **Lunch in a restaurant in a Castle**.

Before returning to Tbilisi, a stop will be made in **Vardisubani**, at a **farmer's cellar** to admire the **traditional Giarre** (Kvevri), where the fermentation and aging of wine takes place, a practice still widespread in Georgia, and to taste its wines **Free dinner** and overnight at the hotel.

## **3 September: TBILISI - MTSKHETA (JAVARI MONASTERY and SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL) - ANANURI COMPLEX - GUDAURI**

Breakfast and departure to the west to visit **Mtskheta**, the ancient capital and Religious center of Georgia, with its historical monuments, both **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**: the **Jvari Monastery** (6th century), which stands on top of a high hill, and **Svetitskhoveli Cathedral** (11th century), one of the holiest places in Georgia as it is believed that the Robe of Christ was buried here.

**Lunch with local dishes, the best of Georgian cuisine!**





Continuing along a **Military road**, we reach the **Fortified Complex of Ananuri** (12th century), with its ancient history and the beautiful nature that surrounds it. This medieval monument, very well preserved, was originally used for military purposes and only from the 13th century it became the residence of the Dukes of Aragvi.

In 2007, the **Ananuri Complex** was listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Continue to **Gudauri**, upon arrival, accommodation at the **Marco Polo Hotel** (4 \* sup.), dinner and overnight at the hotel.



#### 4 September: GUDAURI - JVARI PASS - MONTE CHAUKHEBI - CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY - JUTA Village - GUDAURI

After breakfast at the hotel, departure with 4x4 cars to reach, through the spectacular **Jvari Pass**, the **Church of SS. Trinity of Gergeti**, one of the symbols of Georgia, located in a scenic position at an altitude of 2170 m. and dominated by the bulk of **Mount Kazbegi**. After the visit of the Church, time available for a short walk during which, if the weather conditions are favorable, we will be able to admire the **Mount Kazbegi Glacier**, one of the highest in the **Greater Caucasus** (5047 m).

We resume the 4X4 cars to reach the **Juta Village** through the beautiful **Sno Valley** which, due to snowfalls, is almost completely cut off from the outside world for several months of the year.

Once in Juta, lunch by local families (a typical Georgian tradition!) and tasting of **honeys from the Caucasian mountains**. In the afternoon, walk in the village and then return to Gudauri.

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.



#### 5 September: GUDAURI - GORI - Stalin's MUSEUM - UPLISTSIKHE - KUTAISI

In the morning, after breakfast, departure for **Gori**, the heart of the **Shida Kartli Region**, where we visit the **Stalin Museum**. Lunch in a restaurant. We continue on the **Silk Road** and visit the **Rock-Carved City of Uplistsikhe** (1st millennium BC), nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. It is an old complex with residences, markets, wine cellars with terracotta vessels to preserve it, ovens, a theater, a counter of a pharmacy and a church: all carved into the rock, which will give us a clear idea of how the daily life of the locals took place. Departure for Kutaisi, second largest city in Georgia. We stop shortly before for accommodation in the **Tskaltubo Plaza Hotel** (4 \* sup.). Dinner and overnight at the hotel



#### 6 September: KUTAISI - City tour - ZUGDIDI - SVANETI Region - MESTIA



After breakfast we will discover the homeland of the Golden Fleece: the great **Monumental Complex of Gelati** (12th century), an **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, an exciting visit for the panorama over the hills of Kutaisi, for the great medieval architecture of the **Cathedral** and the **Academy of Philosophy** and for the magnificent frescoes and mosaics, still well preserved.

Afterwards, a visit to the **Bagrati Cathedral** (11th century), nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, on the **Ukimerioni hill**, a masterpiece of medieval Georgian architecture (1003) and a symbol of the United Georgia.





Next departure for the **Svanezia Region**, a pearl of the country, among high snow-capped peaks, wooded hills and spectacular valleys. Typical are the **Medieval towers** that stand out in all the villages where time seems to have stopped and the ancient customs are still part of everyday life. Stop in **Zugdidi**, a town that offers little to tourists, for **lunch in a restaurant to taste the typical cuisine of the Megrelian people**. Upon arrival in **Mestia**, accommodation in the **Post Hotel** (3\*, impossible to get any better!), **dinner** and overnight at the hotel.



## 7 September: MESTIA - MULAKHI, CHAZHASHI and USHGULI Villages- Ethnographic Museum - MESTIA

In the morning, after breakfast, we go to **Upper Svanezia**, recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** as an exceptional example of a mountain landscape with medieval villages and the many **Tower Houses**.

Along the way, photo stop in the picturesque **Mulakhi Village** and then in the **Chazhashi Village** which still has more than 200 of these very unusual houses, used both as homes and as defense posts against invaders.

We then arrive in **Ushguli Village** where time seems to have stopped. **The Svanetian Towers**, built centuries ago, still look proudly at Georgia's tallest glacier, **the Shkhara** (5,201 m).

We take a walk in the village, up to the **Church of Lamaria** (Mother of God - XII century) where the ancient frescoes are still intact, an exceptional example of mural art.



**Lunch by local families** (very popular custom) and subsequent departure for the return to Mestia.

Before arriving, we visit the **Ethnographic Museum**, with a beautiful panoramic terrace, where unique archaeological and cultural treasures are preserved.

The Museum contains archaeological, ethnographic and numismatic finds, with extraordinary works of art such as icons, crosses and unique manuscripts.

Return to Mestia, **dinner** and overnight at the hotel.



## 8 September: MESTIA - Church of LENJERI - OZURGETI - MENABDE Winery - BATUMI

Breakfast at the hotel and departure for **Batumi**, a popular summer tourist destination and an important port on the **Black Sea**.

Along the way we visit the small **medieval Church of Lenjeri**, frescoed both inside and outside, and shortly after we will be able to admire the **Inguri Dam**, one of the largest in the former Soviet Union. We are in the area of the **Wetlands and Forests of Colchis**, nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Stop in **Ozurgeti** for **lunch in a farmhouse**.

We start with a walk in the gardens where Georgian tea is grown, which we will taste after lunch.







Next visit of the **Cantina di Menabde**, an organic farm, where we taste some wines of the **Guria region**, including the famous **Chkhaveri**. Arrival in Batumi and accommodation in the **Batumi World Palace** (4 \* sup).

**Dinner in a restaurant** and overnight at the hotel.

### 9 September: GUIDED TOUR OF BATUMI

After breakfast, visit **Batumi**. Overlooking the **Black Sea**, the city is an important summer tourist destination, but it is also a real open-air museum, a wonderful synthesis of ancient and modern architecture.

In recent years, very prominent European architects have been able to embody their interesting ideas here.

Let's start with a visit to the ultra-modern **Piazza Batumi**, with its many cafes and restaurants, and then **Piazza di Era**, with the **Statue of Medea** and the **Golden Fleece** in the center.

We then take the **Seafront**, where there are a series of works created by contemporary artists, including the **Tower of the Georgian Alphabet** and the **Statue of Ali and Nino**, the two "unfortunate lovers", **one of the most beautiful and spectacular statues in the world**. We also visit the **Cathedral** and other Churches.

**Lunch in a restaurant**. Following, an excursion to the nearby **Architectural Complex of Gonio** (1st century) which represented an important Roman-Byzantine military post.

Inside, **the oldest Fortress in Georgia** (7th-8th century BC), connected to the myth of the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece and where archaeological excavations have brought to light several ancient objects of great interest. Upon returning to Batumi, we take a walk in the **Botanical Garden**, divided into 9 geographical areas, with thousands of plants that will amaze us with the great variety of the collection.

**Free dinner** and overnight at the hotel.



### 10 September: BATUMI - CANYON of OKATSE - CAVE of PROMETEO - KUTAISI

Breakfast and departure for Kutaisi. Along the way we visit the **Okatse Canyon**, a natural wonder of Georgia with an exciting 700 m. long walkway, 100 m. over the bottom of the Canyon, culminating in an observation platform. It was built in 2014, as part of the Canyon renovation project.

**Lunch in a restaurant**. Continue to the **Prometheus Cave**, a true masterpiece of Nature.

The visit lasts an hour in a riot of stalactites, stalagmites, underground lakes and rivers, rock formations alternating with limestone formations of the most incredible shapes.

There are **16 caves**, spread over a walking path, 1060 meters long and improved in 2012.

It is also possible to enjoy a **boat tour** for a 280 meter route, along an underground river.

Upon arrival, accommodation in the **Best Western Kutaisi Hotel** (4 \* sup.), **typical dinner with traditional dishes in a farmhouse** and overnight in the hotel.





## 11 September: KUTAISI - BORIONI PARK - RABAT FORTRESS - VALODIA'S COTTAGE

Breakfast at the hotel and departure for the **Samtske-Javakheti region**. We are in the **Lower Caucasus** and the area is very different from the others, for its views and the fertile valley of the **Mtkvari river**.

A visit to a laboratory for the **processing of ceramics** is planned, where we will discover the traditional methods. It resumes crossing the picturesque **Gorges in the Mtkvari Canyon**, with a subsequent stop to visit the **Borjoni Park**, where we will be able to taste the **famous mineral water of volcanic origin**, born 1500 years ago and pushed to the surface by natural carbon dioxide, from a depth of 8 -10 kilometres, flowing directly from the soil.



**Lunch in a restaurant.** Another stop in **Akhaltzikhe** to visit the historic center called "**Rabati**", characterized by colorful **Georgian houses**, the **Mosque**, the **Church of San Marino** and the well restored **Citadel**, with the old **Jakelis Fortress** (XII-XIV century) and the **Castle**. Last stop of a few minutes to take some photos at the **Khertvisi Fortress** (X-XIV century), one of the oldest in Georgia that was in use throughout the feudal period, nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Arrival in **Vardzia**, accommodation in the typical **Valodia's Cottage farmhouse**, **dinner** and overnight in the hotel.

## 12 September: VALODIA'S COTTAGE - VARDZIA - TSALKA - ASURETI Village - TBILISI

Breakfast and visit of the **cave City-monastery of Vardzia**, excavated on the side of **Mount Erusheli**, also nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

The Caves of Vardzia extend along the cliff for about five hundred meters, which makes this place very mystical. Founded in the twelfth century as a fortified religious city, it is one of the best examples of the Georgian Golden Age. **The complex originally had over 3,000 caves and could hold 50,000 people.** Today it offers rock-cut churches with well-preserved frescoes, wine cellars, refectories and hundreds of residences.

At the end of the visit, departure for **Tbilisi**, crossing **Tsalka** in a bare landscape of the **volcanic plateau of the Little Caucasus**, but often skirting large blue lakes and wide valleys where shepherds will meet with their sheep and herding dogs. **Lunch in a restaurant.**

Then we arrive at **Asureti**, an ancient Georgian village, destroyed by invasions in the 18th century and rebuilt, in the following century, by 1,400 families of German colonists brought here by the Russian Tsar Alexander I.



The German settlement remained here until 1941, when Stalin ordered the Germans to be deported from Georgia. Asureti is also distinguished by its beautiful nature with forests, valleys and beautiful views that create a peaceful and pleasant environment.

One of the tourist attractions of the village is the **Asureti Waterfall**.

Arrival in **Tbilisi**, accommodation at the **Museum Hotel** (4 \* sup.). **Free dinner** and overnight in the hotel.

## 13 September: TBILISI - ROMA

After breakfast, we visit the **Community-run Zero Effect Shop** that aims to raise people's awareness of a **zero-waste lifestyle** and give them the chance to learn about **environmentally friendly plastic alternatives** and learn other ways to live a life to zero waste and save our planet!

After a little lesson on how to produce objects, we would have the opportunity to buy very refined and useful items. Afterwards, **lunch in a restaurant overlooking the old city** and subsequent transfer to the international airport, in time for the return to Rome.

Handling of customs formalities and departure at 5:25 p.m. with **TURKISH AIRWAYS** scheduled flights, with a stop and change of aircraft in Istanbul (TK382 and TK1361 - duration of flights 5h 10 ').

**Dinner on board.** Arrival in Rome at 0.15 am.

**End of the beautiful adventure, see you next time !!**

<b>Individual fee</b>	<b>Participants &gt;&gt;</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>20-24</b>	<b>25-29</b>	<b>Oltre 29</b>
Basic rate (14 days Full Board treatment, minus three free dinners!)		2.100,00	2.000,00	1.890,00	1.820,00
Airport tax surcharge al 31/12/2020		220,00	220,00	220,00	220,00
<b>Cancellation guarantee</b> (see conditions below)		70,00	70,00	70,00	70,00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2.390,00</b>	<b>2.290,00</b>	<b>2.180,00</b>	<b>2.110,00</b>

**Accommodation in a single room € 590,00**

**DEPOSIT € 800.00 upon registration - BALANCE by July 16, 2021**

to be paid to Tours Service - B.ca Popolare Emilia Romagna

IBAN: IT 23 M 05387 03204 00000 1555310 - BIC: PASCITM1R12

indicating: **Name and Surname - Tour Georgia**

**Offered services:**

- TURKISH AIRWAYS scheduled flights as per program and transfer to and from the airports;
- Accommodation in a 4 \* superior hotels (one to 3 \*) with full board minus three dinners in the larger centers;
- **The lunches will be:** 9 in a restaurant (3 of which are typical), 2 in local families, 1 in an Farmhouse and 1 in a Castle;  
**The dinners will be:** 5 in the Hotel, 3 in the Restaurant (2 of which are typical) and 2 in the Farmhouse;
- Transfers, excursions and visits by private air-conditioned coach;
- A day in modern air-conditioned 4x4 vehicles;
- Italian and English speaking guide / tour leader from arrival to departure day;
- All admissions to the sites mentioned in the program;
- Health and baggage insurance and **the Insurance waives the trip**, Gadgets;
- Travel kit (backpack, document holder, luggage tag).

**Not included are:**

- Porterage in airports and hotels;
- Any local taxes not payable in advance before departure in Italy;
- Drinks, tips, extras in general and anything not mentioned in the "Offered services".

- Quotations made directly in Euro, so they cannot change before departure;
- Airport taxes already included in the price, must be reconfirmed before departure, for any adjustments;
- The Airlines, due to the continuous fluctuation of the cost of oil, reserve the right to apply a FUEL ADJUSTMENT surcharge, up to 21 days before

**THE "THE INSURANCE WAIVES THE TRIP" already included in the cost of the trip, provides for the full refund of the anticipated amount in case of cancellation for any reason (which must not be communicated!) up to 45 calendar days before departure. Between the 44th and the 8th day there will be a 10% penalty on the cost of the trip, which will rise to 20% in the last seven days, up to the time of departure**

Registration and information: **Sandro Palombieri 06/94.48.171 - 347/93.72.291**

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**Organizing agency: TOURS SERVICE**