
12 days/ 9 nights Discovery of Caucasus

covering Azerbaijan , Georgia  & Armenia 

23 May – 03 June 2018



This region across the Caucasus, lying at the crossroads of Europe & Asia, is packed with the legends of the Golden Fleece, stunning scenery and warm & hospitable people. It also, amazingly, remains relative unknown even to many experienced travelers .

Well, this is the perfect early summer trip for those wanting a diverse experience in an often overlooked part of our world.

Take this fascinating 10days tour around Caucasus countries of Georgia, Armenia & Azerbaijan is a perfect discovery of their great history, culture, rich spirit and diversity.

Welcome on board these 3 Caucasus countries.





DAY 01 23May Wednesday Kuala Lumpur – Baku (Azerbaijan)

Meet at 11.30pm at KLIA for our flight to Baku via Dubai / Doha.

24MAY KULDXB 0155 0455 / DXBGYD 1155 1445 (flight schedule subject to change)

DAY 02 24May Thursday Arriving BAKU (Azerbaijan) (MOB, D)

ETA 1445

Upon arrival, meet and greet. Drive to Aleshgah to visit the Fire Worshippers Temple.

Transfer to the old City of BAKU – Icheri Sheher : visit the Palace of the Shirvans, Miden’s Tower, and the market square.

Dinner at a local restaurant. Drive to Yanar Dagh to see the stunning natural gas fire.

A late check-in in hotel .

Overnight in BAKU 3* Hotel Diplomat or similar

DAY 03 25May Friday BAKU - GOBUSTAN – SHEKI (B/L/D)

After breakfast, a short visit to the new Shehidler Khiyabany Memory Alley to have a great panoramic view of Baku City in day light. Continue touring new Baku and exploring architecture of 19-20th centuries: Nizami Street, Fountain Square, Nizami Ganjavi monument, Rasul-Zade Street.

Drive to Gobustan Reserves to visit the open-air museum.

Continue to Sheki (4-5 hours)

Overnite in Sheki – Isaam 3* Hotel





DAY 04 26MAY Saturday SHEKI - SIGHNAGHI (GEORGIA) - BODBE – TBILISI (B/L/D)

After breakfast, visit the Sheki Khan Saray, Sheki History Museum and the 18th Century Friday Mosque.

Drive to the border to cross the Balakan-Lagodekhi border to Georgia-Sighnaghi.

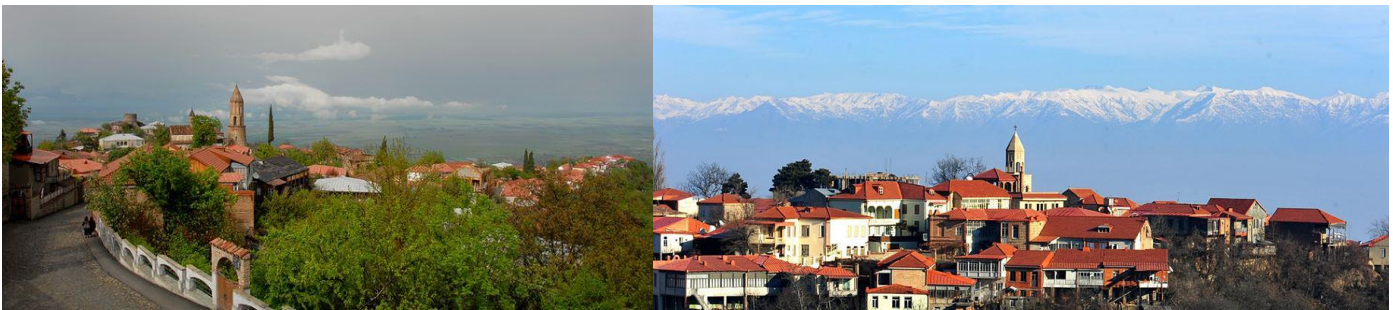
Go through the border crossing formalities and our Georgia local guide and bus will be awaiting for us on the other side of the border.

Continue the road journey to Sighnaghi. On arrival spend some time walk through the narrow streets surrounded by defensive walls with 23 towers. If time permit, have an optional (additional about EUR 10 per person) to visit a wine house to enjoy wine tasting in wine cellar.

Continue the journey to Tbilisi with an en-route to visit the Bodbe Monastery complex.

Arrive Tbilisi in the late evening. Dinner and check into hotel.

Overnight in Tbilisi – Oriental 3* hotel





DAY 05 27MAY Sunday TBILISI (B/L/D)

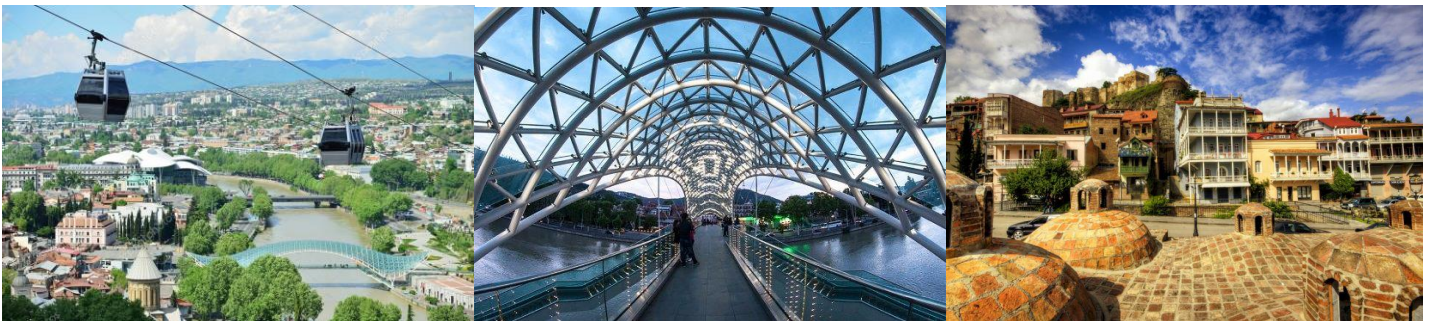
After breakfast, start of Tbilisi sightseeing from Holy Trinity cathedral, one of the largest orthodox cathedrals in the world. Continue to **Metekhi church** and monument to Vakhtang Gorgasali, the legendary founder of Tbilisi. Take cable car to **Narikala Fortress** to enjoy breathtaking panoramic view of the city. Walk down to the district of Sulphur bath houses passing by the only mosque in Tbilisi.

Stroll through the **Sharden area** full of narrow streets with cozy cafés, wine tasting bars, souvenir shops, and breathe in the living past.

Visit **Sioni Cathedral**, **Anchiskhati Basilica**, and the **clock tower of famous Rezo Gabriadze Theatre**. Cross the **Bridge of Peace** to **Rike Park** and head to **Open Air Museum of Ethnography**, a miniature model of Georgia.

Enjoy a dinner with Folk show.

Overnight in TBILISI – Oriental 3* hotel





DAY 06 28MAY Monday TBILISI – Mtskheta – Ananuri – KAZBEGI (B/L/D)

After breakfast, drive to Mtskheta, one of the oldest towns and the cultural and religious centre of Georgia. Mtskheta was the capital of the Eastern Georgian Kingdom of Iberia from the third century BC. Visit Jvari Church, a true architectural masterpiece of the early Medieval Period overlooking the confluence of Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers from the top of the hill, and Svetitskhoveli, the main cathedral of Mtskheta and a sacred place where the robe of Christ is being kept.

Continue to Ananuri architectural complex, a former residence of Argveti Dukes. Complex featuring churches and towers dating back to the 16th - 17th XVII centuries is beautifully overlooking Jinali reservoir. Continue driving on Georgian Military Highway passing through the highest point of it at 2379 m above sea level.

Arrive in Kazbegi, a small town with the views of Mt. Kazbek (or Mkinvari) 5033 m, the seventh highest peak in the Caucasus Mountains.

Take a ride in 4x4 jeeps on the winding roads surrounded by natural forests and impressive rock formation to drive up to 8,000 ft above sea level to a view point to see Gergeti Trinity Church against the background of huge, picturesque mountains which is the most breathtaking scenery in Georgia and has always be regarded as one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

(note: the opening of this winding road to the top is subjected to local conditions and could be bad due to the weather)

Catch up with some wild flowers there too (subject to weather)

Overnite in Stepantsminda - Rooms Hotel Kazbegi 4*

DAY 07 29MAY TUESDAY Stepantsminda – JUTA – TBILISI (B/L/D)

Breakfast at the hotel, spend some time free & easy to walk around the hotel area and the tiny town of Stepantsminda. By 11am, check out and transfer to on a 4WD jeep towards the village of JUTA, which is one of the highest villages of Europe (2100 m). The main attraction in this area, except the above-mentioned village, is a mountain Range Chaukhi and also along the way, hopefully can catch up with some wild flowers over the area.

After visiting the village, drive back to Stepantsminda to change back to our coach to drive back to Tbilisi.

Upon arriving Tbilisi, enjoy a good dinner before checking into the hotel.

Overnight in Tbilisi - Oriental 3* hotel



DAY 08 30MAY Wednesday : TBILISI - SADAKHLO - YEREVAN (ARMENIA) (B/L/D)

After breakfast, drive to the Georgian-Armenian border – “Sadakhlo-Bagratashen”.

Cross the border, meet your Armenian guide and driver and start the journey to the land of ancient traditions and oldest temples.

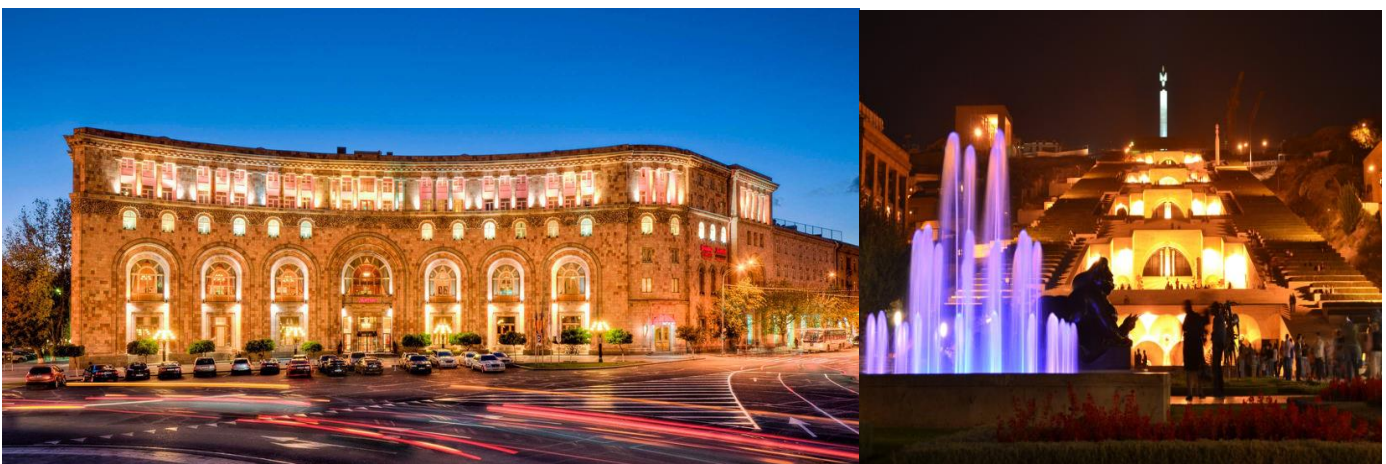
Drive to Lori region and visit **Haghpat** monastery, UNESCO World Heritage Site. Stunning example of Armenian traditional architecture erected in 10-13th centuries stands on a hillside beautifully overlooking Debed River.

Drive to **Lake Sevan**, “The Jewel of Armenia” and one of the largest high-mountainous fresh water lakes in the world. The coastline of Lake Sevan is rich with thick woods, white bare steep rocks, mountain steppes and Alpine meadows. Spend some time at the Lake Sevan.

Next stop at Sevanavank to visit the remnants of the monastery that include two temples – Surb Arakelots and Surb Astvatsatsin standing among numerous khachkars. The buildings were constructed from black tuff which probably gave the monastery its name Sevanavank – “the Black Monastery”. The view from there is simply magnificent: the mountains surround lake from all sides and snow tops are seen almost on the entire perimeter and disappear behind the horizon.

Continue the road journey to Yerevan, the capital of Armenia for dinner, after dinner, a short night-city-drive tour before reaching our hotel to check in.

Overnight in Yerevan Cascade 3* Hotel or similar





DAY 09 31MAY Thursday : YEREVAN – GARNI Village - ECHMIDZIN – YEREVAN (B/L/D)

After breakfast, drive to Garni, one of the major villages in Armenia famous for its fortress. The fortress is the only pagan sacred place from the 1st century that survived aggressive introduction of Christianity in the 4th century. Experience the traditional lavash making in Garni village.

Next stop is at the monastery complex Geghard (“spear”). A beautiful landscape of Geghard is framed with towering cliffs. Decorative art cut into rocks reflect and explain Medieval Ages development throughout the region. The complex was introduced to the history in the 4th century as a sacred spring inside a cave. Continue to the Holy See of Armenia, Etchmiadzin. Visit Etchmiadzin Cathedral* which is the residence of the head of Armenian Apostolic Church the Catholicos of All Armenians.

Return to Yerevan for dinner .

Overnight in Yerevan – Cascade 3* hotel or similar



DAY 10 01Jun Friday : Yerevan – Khor Virap – Areni – Tatev – Goris (B/L/D)

After breakfast, head to **Khor Virap** monastery (“deep pit”). According to the legend, St. Gregory the Illuminator, the Baptist of Armenia, had been kept here in the basement during 13 years for the disseminating of Christianity until tsar Tradt decided to adopt new religion. Monastery location allows you to enjoy the best views of the Mt. Ararat. Continue to Areni, a city known for producing famous Armenian wine from pomegranate and apricot. Have a wine degustation in a local winery.

Drive to **Tatev Monastery** (9-13 cent.). Approaching the jewel of medieval Armenian architecture on the **longest aerial tramway** (included) in the world you will see the monastery, the powerful impregnable stronghold towering on a rock. Such a remote position of it was strategically favorable as the monastery was simultaneously religious and political centre of the region. Standing on the edge of the rock, the monastery takes your breath away: somewhere down below the river flows in the valley and crowded velvet green hills stand in silence...

On the way back on the tramway, hopefully be able to catch the setting sun over the area.

Drive to Goris to overnight. Hotel Lara 3* or similar



DAY 11 02Jun Saturday : GORIS – Noravank - Yerevan City tour – departure (B/L/D)

After an early breakfast, drive back to Yerevan (5hr) . On the way, Yerevan visiting famous **Complex of Noravank**, situated on a ledge of a deep winding gorge of a tributary of the Arpa River near the village of Amaghu, Yeghegnadzor District. Noravank ensemble stands amidst the bizarre-shaped precipitous red cliffs.

Arriving Yerevan after lunch. Begin our Yerevan city by visiting weekend market of **Vernissage**, the biggest souvenir market in Yerevan.

Have a walking tour towards the Republic Square, the National Opera & Ballet Theatre and visit the **Cascade Complex**.

After a farewell dinner, transfer to the airport for our departure flight @ midnight

03JUN EVNDXB 0140 0445 / DXBKUL 1025 2150 (flight schedule subject to change)

Day 12 03Jun Sunday ETA Kuala Lumpur 2150

Point to Note :

- (i) Border-Crossing : there are formalities one will have to go through and the time taken depends on the immigration & custom traffic at that point of time. One will have to walk over the neutral zone by yourself (about 200-300m away) with your bags.
- (ii) VISA Requirement : Azerbaijan E-VISA @ USD 50.00 per person
 Georgia No Visa required
 Armenia VISA on Arrival @ USD 25.00 per person
 (Visa requirement may change by the respective countries at any time)
- (iii) Itineraries may subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances beyond EL SOL Travel’s control like local condition, restriction imposed by the local authority and weather. Every effort will be made to operate the itinerary as planned.

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Costing for min. 16 persons to go

a) Ground Arrangement Twin-sharing per person	@MYR 8,990.00*
b) Air ticket KUL – Baku // Yerevan – KUL via Dubai/Doha	@MYR 5,730.00*
c) VISA fees (subject to change)	@MYR 350.00
d) Travel Insurance 12 days	@MYR 123.00**
Estimated per person twin sharing	MYR 15,193.00

Single Supplement is MYR 1000.00

*EL SOL Travel may alter the fee in the event of a significant spike in fuel prices, airfares, and foreign exchange rates. Exchange rate used for the above is based on 1USD: 4.10MYR. ** Air ticket rate quoted is based on the currently fare priced and may be subjected to change & availability and the actual air ticket fare & schedule will be advised upon confirmation of booking.

** you may opt out this travel insurance if you already have a valid travel insurance coverage.

Ground Arrangement included :-

- a) 9 nights hotel accommodation at the mentioned hotels or similar with daily breakfast.
- b) 9x lunches & 10 x dinners
- c) Service of professional English speaking guides in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia
- d) Private transfer, excursions and entrance fees as in the itinerary
- e) Wine tasting in Areni & masterclass of lavash making
- f) Bottle of drinking water per person per day
- g) Tipping for all the local guides & drivers.

Excluding

- a) Camera Fee if applicable and any fees payable which is out of the itinerary.
- b) Tipping to porters

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Booking

- Deposit payment @ MYR 6,000.00 per person
- Balance of payment 2 months before the departure date

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