

**Complete Georgia**

**14 days - 13 nights**

**Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Uplistsikhe, Gori, Borjomi, Vardzia, Kutaisi, Svaneti, Ushguli, Mestia, Poti, Batumi, Kvishkheti, Khashuri, Sno, Kazbegi, Signaghi**

**Discovery, Culture, History, Adventure**

**Operates May through October**

**This program may be operated for individuals or for groups**

*Planning to visit Georgia? This country is not the priority for tourists but is becoming more and more popular with travelers. Culture and history lovers love it, and there is plenty to do in Georgia: relax on the beach, visit big cities, go to the mountains, admire monasteries and very old villages... The food is great, delicious and it would be the birthplace of wine. What to do in Georgia? Read the article to learn all about it, then I'll share some practical info on Georgia.*

**Day 1: Tbilisi**

Early arrival at Tbilisi Airport. After Immigration and Custom formalities, you'll be met by your guide for a transfer to the hotel.

**Day 2: Tbilisi (Mtskheta)**

Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, is a city steeped in history where old and modern blend together. Indeed, the city was founded in 458, and people go there for its culture, art and food! Encounter the true Tbilisi spirit, with the visits to the Old Tbilisi Sulfur Baths, Georgian Orthodox and Armenian Gregorian churches, a Jewish synagogue and a Turkish mosque side by side, reflecting Tbilisi's acceptance and tolerance of different religions. Observe the 19th century wooden Italian dwellings that are still preserved here. See a recent monument, the Tbilisi Sameba Cathedral, the largest cathedral in the Caucasus. **In the afternoon, drive to Mtskheta, only 13 miles from Tbilisi.** It is the religious capital of Georgia and it was the first capital of the country. There are three of the most important churches in Georgia in Mtskheta: the Jvari Monastery which dates from the 6th century, the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral which dates from 1010 and the Samtavro Monastery that combines the Samtavro Transfiguration Church and the Nunnery of St. Nino, built, presumably, in the 4th century. Return to Tbilisi for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

**Note:** *To visit the Churches men cannot wear shorts and women must have their heads covered.*

**Day 3: Tbilisi, Uplistsikhe, Gori, Borjomi**

Morning drive to Uplistsikhe, an ancient underground city that was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kartli. The place was founded in the late Bronze Age, around 1000 BCE, and continued to be inhabited until the 13th century CE. During the first 15 centuries, Uplistsikhe was one of the most important political and religious centers. Archaeologists have unearthed numerous temples and findings relating to a sun goddess, worshipped prior to the arrival of Christianity. When Christianity arrived in Georgia, the city lost importance in favor of the new centers of Christian culture, most notably Mtskheta and Tbilisi. Nevertheless, life continued in Uplistsikhe, Christian structures have been built, and for a short time, Christianity and the old faith coexisted in the city. Visit King Tamar's Hall (First woman ruler of Georgia), wine cellar, and Princely Church. In the afternoon, continue to Gori where Joseph Stalin was born and raised and you may visit the museum dedicated to him where his belongings, photos, documents are displayed. Go to Gori Fortress, a historical fortress in Kartli, in the center of Gori, on a high rocky hill. The ruins and archeological materials on the northern slope confirm that in the last centuries of the 1st millennium BCE there was a strong fortress to protect the population around it. From where you have an incredible view. Continue to Borjomi for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

**Day 4: Borjomi, Vardzia, Kutaisi**

This morning will be dedicated to visit Borjomi, known for its mineral water sold throughout Eastern Europe. A quiet city where you can relax in the central park, take the funicular to admire the city from above and visit Borjomi-Kharagauli Park. In the afternoon, we drive to another ancient

underground city, that was founded in the 12th century, during the reign of King (actually the Queen!) Tamar. This underground monastery was 1,640 feet long and spanned 13 levels. There were more than 400 rooms, 25 wine cellars, a church, a bakery, etc. and it looks like it was taken directly from the pages of Lord of the Rings. In 1283, only a century after its construction, a devastating earthquake literally ripped the place apart. The quake shattered the mountain slope and destroyed more than two-thirds of the city, exposing the hidden innards of the remainder. However, despite this, a monastery community persisted until 1551 when it was raided and destroyed by Persian Sash Tahmasp. Continue to Kutausi, arriving in time for dinner at your hotel. [B/D]

**Note:** *Take comfortable shoes to visit Vardzia.*

#### **Day 5: Kutaisi**

Wander at your leisure, capture the ambiance and tranquil atmosphere of Kutaisi. Allow two hours maximum to go around the 5-6 streets of the center. Right in the middle of the town's main square you'll find the very pretty Colchis fountain and its animal statues, incorporated in 2011. Do not miss the Tetri Bridge, built by Gustave Eiffel, with windows in places on the ground so you can see the river flowing under our feet. While looking at the bridges, also check out the Chain Bridge, originally built in the 5th century. Strolling through Kutaisi's Green Bazaar, a place rich in color and aroma, is also recommended. Another emblem of Kutaisi that you cannot miss during your visit is the funicular. It dates from the Soviet era (built in the 1950s), and has obviously not been modified or refitted since. If you have time, check out the Parliament of Georgia, a huge building constructed in a futuristic style, a complete mismatch with the rest of Kutaisi's architecture! It is not possible to enter it, you can just see it from the outside. Leave Bagrati Cathedral for late afternoon. The cathedral, built in the 11th century on the hill overlooking the city, offers a magnificent view of the orange roofs of Kutaisi, its surroundings and the mountains in the distance. At sunset, when the lights are glowing, it's sublime! After the visit, return to your hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

#### **Day 6: Kutaisi, Svaneti**

After breakfast, start your 5-hour drive to Svaneti, stopping en-route for lunch and a little rest. Many say that Svaneti is the most beautiful region in Georgia. For a long time, it was an isolated region because it is in the heights, so the Svans had their own language and culture. You will see plenty of medieval towers, which were used in case of attack. It is a hiking enthusiast's paradise. [B/D]

#### **Day 7: Svaneti, Ushguli, Mestia**

Today you'll discover the beautiful Caucasus Mountains during the drive to the Ushguli village, the highest inhabited place in Europe. We'll go to the Ushguli Tower, visible from the access road. Climbing to the top of the tower may be risky and you need to assess your capabilities. You will need to climb up using the wooden stairs provided. There is no proper way to climb to the roof and no safety rail provided for climbers. Stroll the city streets and marvel at the city's 'time edge' feel. Cows outnumber people in Ushguli and roam the streets at will, so look down as you walk! Make a stop at one of the local cafes for some lunch food. A visit to the Ethnography Museum is well worth the \$2 that local children will ask for admission. Housed in a preserved Svan house, the museum contains artefacts dating from the long history of the Svaneti regions. Local children will provide repeated descriptions of objects in passable English. The Georgian War Chest, placed in the "most inaccessible part of Georgia", houses the countless national treasures that were held in Ushguli Monastery during times of conflict. Continue to Mestia, a small village nestled in the hollow of the mountains. The small district which goes up towards the mountain, is made up of very pretty small stone lanes, where one can observe typical Svaneti dwellings with its arches and its innumerable guard towers raised towards the sky. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

#### **Day 8: Mestia, Poti, Batumi**

Early breakfast and departure to the Black Sea resort of Batumi stopping for lunch at the fishing village of Poti. Batumi is a very pleasant city and the second largest city in Georgia, is called the "Las Vegas of the Caucasus" because of its many casinos. Batumi is known for its non-standard architecture. Among the main examples are the Alphabet Tower and the Clock Tower with a small

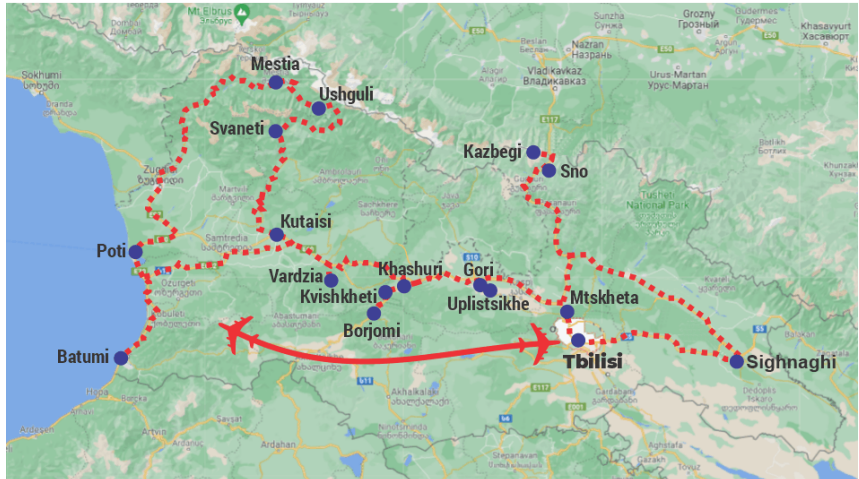
Ferris wheel at the top. Free time to stroll the city. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

**Day 9: Batumi, Kvishkhети**

Take some time to relax at this Black Sea resort before a 4-hour drive to Kvishkhети. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

**Day 10: Kvishkhети (Khashuri)**

Today we'll take a 10-minute drive to Khashuri, a municipality distinguished by its beauty and abundance of cultural monuments. The day will be dedicated to leisurely visits of the beautiful Bijnisi Waterfall, a real paradise, especially in the heat of summer. Then visit the local historical castle-fortresses and medieval temples. Surami Fortress (where according to legend, Zurab, an only child, is bricked up), Bulbuli Fortress and ancient Tsromi Fortress, all creating a vivid picture of Georgia's historical-cultural development. Return to Kvishkhети for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

**Day 11: Kvishkhети, Sno, Kazbegi (Stepantsminda)**

Departure to Sno village to visit the summer residence and patrimonial tower of the current Catholic-Patriarch of Georgia. Visit the towers of Phshansheta dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and the Church of Saint Mary in Sioni, built in the 9th century, where the influence of western European architecture can be noted. Continue to Kazbegi (now Stepantsminda), located 15 minutes for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

**Day 12: Kazbegi, Signaghi**

Early morning departure to Signaghi, a charming little town located in the Kakheti region, the largest wine-producing place in Georgia, and it's a perfect city for wine tasting. Arriving in time for lunch we go directly to the Pheasant's Tears Restaurant to enjoy the local food and wine tasting. Walk along the city wall, it has 23 towers and each has a name, and go to Bodbe Convent, the resting place of St.Nino, the enlightener of the Georgian nation and spreader of Christianity in Georgia. The town is also famous for its traditional carpets. Enjoy the landscapes and discover its history. Dinner and overnight in Signaghi. [B/L/D]

**Day 13: Signaghi, Tbilisi**

Return to Tbilisi and check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is free to rest and relax, shopping or exploring the city on your own. This evening, join your guide for a farewell dinner at a typical restaurant. [B/D]

**Day 14: Tbilisi, USA**

Very early transfer to the airport to board your flight back home.

[B] = Breakfast | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner



**Your Tour includes:**

- Round-trip airfare New York/Tbilisi
- Arrival and departure transfers
- 13 nights' accommodation:
  - Tbilisi 3 nights
  - Borjomi 1 night
  - Kutaisi 2 nights
  - Svaneti 1 night
  - Mestia 1 night
  - Batumi 1 night
  - Kvishkheta 2 nights
  - Kazbegi 1 night
  - Signaghi 1 night
- Meals
  - Breakfast daily
  - 1 lunch
  - 1 wine tasting
  - 11 dinners
  - 1 farewell dinner
- Old Tbilisi Sulfur Baths
- Tbilisi Orthodox & Armenian churches
- Tbilisi Jewish synagogue & Turkish mosque
- Tbilisi Sameba Cathedral
- Bodbe's St. Nino resting place
- Signaghi famous carpets
- Jvari Monastery
- Svetitskhoveli Cathedral

- Samtavro Transfiguration Church
- Uplistsikhe ancient underground city
- Visit Borjomi-Kharagauli Park
- Vardzia underground monastery
- Walking tour of Kutaisi
- Travel the Caucasus Mountains
- Excursion to Ushguli and Ugvi Pass
- Walking tour of Batumi
- Bijnisi Waterfall
- Khashuri Fortresses
- Visit the towers of Phshansheta
- St.Nino Convent in Signaghi
- English-speaking Driver/guide
- Transportation by modern vehicle
- Entrance fees for sites visited
- All local taxes

**Price does not include:**

- Airfare related taxes and fees
- Travel insurance
- Meals not specified in the program
- Optional activities or tours
- Tips to guides and/or drivers
- Local and/or international phone calls
- Personal and/or medical expenses
- Airport departure tax

**Hotels in your Tour:**

City	Hotel Name	Category	Tripadvisor
Mixed Classes			
Tbilisi	Marriott Hotel	Deluxe	5
Borjomi	Crowne Plaza Borjomi	Deluxe	4.5
Kutaisi	Hotel Terrace Kutaisi	Superior Tourist	4.5
Svaneti	Chalet Mestia	Superior Tourist	5
Mestia	Bapsha Guesthouse	Guesthouse	5
Batumi	Sheraton Batumi Hotel	Deluxe	4.5
Kvishkheta	Mtserlebi Resort	First Class	5
Kazbegi	Rooms Hotel Kazbegi	First Class	4.5
Signaghi	Guest House Maradona	Guesthouse	5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

**Tour Price:**

**Price on request**

This program can be customized for individuals and groups.

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

• **Airfare**

We also be glad to adjust the airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

• **Program**

You may add or remove;



- o Trip days
- o Cities and sites
- o Meals

- **Other options**

- o The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- o If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

**Tour Code:** GE03TBS22VT

**Options:**

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.
- Private arrival and/or departure transfer

**Group Quotations**

- The options suggested in the itinerary will be quoted at time of booking
- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.