

**Georgia's Mountains and Monasteries
9 days - 8 nights**

**Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Signaghi, Tsinandali, Gareji, Ananury, Kazbegi, Kutaisi, Mestia, Ushguli
Discovery, Culture, History, Adventure**

Operates May through October

This program may be operated for individuals or for groups

Are you planning to visit Georgia in the near future? Great idea: It's a lovely this country! The landscapes are grandiose, the cities have a real charm, the food is very good, and the general atmosphere makes you travel back in time. It's clearly a destination worth discovering today.

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 (Signaghi, Tsinandali, Gareji)

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. Departure to Signaghi to visit 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. Next destination is Tsinandali to visit the museum of the famous Georgian Poet Aleksandre Chavchavadze. Next in the program is the Davit Gareja rock-hewn Georgian Orthodox monastery complex dating from the 6th century. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

Day 3: Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Ananury, Kazbegi

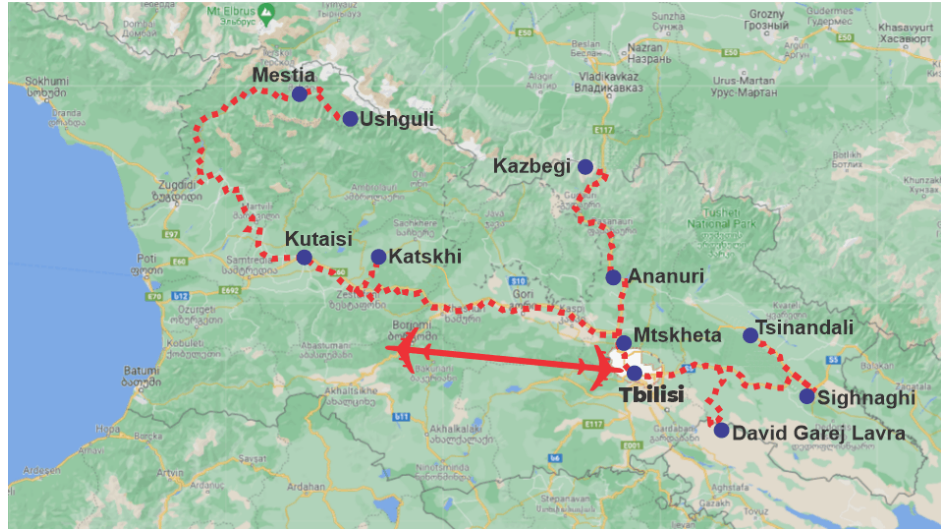
Departure to Kazbegi (now Stepantsminda) to visit the Svetitskhoveli and Jvari (6th CE) monasteries in Mtskheta. The first stop of the day is the Jvari Monastery, situated on a large hill that overlooks the town of Mtskheta and rises just above a huge stretch of river at the confluence of the Koura and Aragvi rivers providing a really beautiful view. Jvari Monastery was built in the 6th century, then a stone wall was erected in the Middle Ages to protect the complex. Today, only ruins remain, but the church, located in the center, is still standing and can be visited. The Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (4th century) is one of the most sacred and magnificent churches in Georgia, and the second holy place of Christ, after the Church of Jerusalem, known for its bloody treasures and the cornerstones of the church. The architecture of the cathedral, surrounded by outside walls, is magnificent. Beautifully and finely decorated, it exposes many beautiful paintings and maps. Several members of the Georgian royal family, including the last two generations of the Kings of Georgia, rest there. On the way to Kazbegi visit Ananuri castle complex. In Kazbegi visit the museum of the famous Georgian writer Aleksandre Kazbegi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

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

Day 4: Kazbegi, Kutaisi

Start with Gergeti Trinity Church, built in the 14th century and located on the right bank of the river Chkheri, under Mount Kazbegi, at an altitude of 7,120 feet. The monastic complex includes an inscribed cross church (the only one in the province of Khévi), a bell tower (both from the 14th century) and a council building against the southern wall of the church built in the 15th century. After the visit continue to Kutaisi to visit the Gelati Monastery, founded in 1106, a masterpiece of the Golden Age of medieval Georgia, a period of political strength and economic growth between the 11th and 13th centuries. It is characterized by the facades of smoothly hewn large blocks, balanced proportions and blind arches for exterior decoration. The Gelati monastery, one of the largest medieval Orthodox monasteries, was also a center of science and education and the Academy it housed was one of the most important culture centers of in ancient Georgia. About 4 miles northwest of Kutaisi is the

Motsameta Monastery, picturesquely located on the cliff of a promontory. Its name, whose meaning is the "Place of the Martyrs", is related to the brothers of a noble who organized a rebellion against the occupying Arabs in the 8th century. Continue to the Bagrati Cathedral, built in the early years of the 11th century, during the reign of King Bagrat III, due to which it was called "Bagrati. Until the end of the 17th century, the monument was safely preserved. In 1692, the Ottomans captured the Kutaisi fortress and blew up the Bagrati temple during the battle. Finally, be surprised by Sataplia caves. Discover historical-cultural places, see a dinosaur footprint and the karst cave. Return to Kutaisi for dinner and overnight. [B/D]



Motsameta Monastery, picturesquely located on the cliff of a promontory. Its name, whose meaning is the "Place of the Martyrs", is related to the brothers of a noble who organized a rebellion against the occupying Arabs in the 8th century. Continue to the Bagrati Cathedral, built in the early years of the 11th century, during the reign of King Bagrat III, due to which it was called "Bagrati. Until the end of the 17th century, the monument was safely preserved. In 1692, the Ottomans captured the Kutaisi fortress and blew up the Bagrati temple during the battle. Finally, be surprised by Sataplia caves. Discover historical-cultural places, see a dinosaur footprint and the karst cave. Return to Kutaisi for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

Day 5: Kutaisi, Mestia

This morning will be spent traveling on the Caucasus Mountains to reach Mestia, a highland townlet in northwest Georgia at an elevation of 4,920 feet, where we'll arrive in time for lunch. In the afternoon, visit the Ethnographic museum and the house museum of the famous Georgian alpinist Mikheil Khergiani. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

Day 6: Mestia, Ushguli, Kutaisi

Departure to Ushguli, the highest continually inhabited settlement in Europe, at 7,215 feet. Here, against the snowy backdrop of Mount Shkhara, medieval stone towers stand at attention like an immovable brigade. Cool, thin air whips across the hills. The nearest town, located 30 miles away, is cut off by snow from October to April, which puts the 30 local families in virtual isolation for half of the year. On the way to Ugvir Pass, see the mount summits of Tetnuli (15,853 feet) and Ushba (15,420 feet). Visit the Lamaria Church dating from the 9th century. Departure to Kutaisi for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

Day 7: Kutaisi (Katskhi)

Today, we travel to Katskhi to see the imposing limestone monolithic pillar 131 feet tall. In pagan times, before the advent of Christianity, the towering Katskhi Pillar was thought to represent a local god of fertility. With the arrival of Christianity in Georgia, in the 4th century, the rock came to represent seclusion. The locals call it the Pillar of Life. At the summit of the Katskhi pillar, are the remains of a complex composed of a monastery church and cells for hermits built between the 6th and 8th centuries. The final approach to this spiritual landmark is made by foot. You will need to trek the 20-minute hike in which the monolith suddenly soars in the vibrant Georgian landscape horizon. Consider it an enchanting experience that will only intensify as you near the pillar itself. A climb up to the steps is a sure sign that you will be nearly there. After the visit, return to Kutaisi for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

Day 8: Kutaisi, Tbilisi

Morning departure to Tbilisi, arriving in time for lunch and check-in at your hotel. Free afternoon. [B]

Day 9: Tbilisi, USA

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

[B] = Breakfast | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner

Your Tour includes:

- Round-trip airfare New York/Tbilisi
- Arrival and departure transfers
- 8 nights' accommodation:
 - Tbilisi 3 nights
 - Kazbegi 1 night
 - Kutaisi 3 nights
 - Mestia 1 night
- Meals
 - Breakfast daily
 - 5 dinners
- Old Tbilisi Sulfur Baths
- Tbilisi Orthodox & Armenian churches
- Tbilisi Jewish synagogue & Turkish mosque
- Tbilisi Sameba Cathedral
- Bodbe's St. Nino resting place
- Sighnaghi famous carpets
- Visits:
 - Davit Gareja Orthodox Monastery
 - Jvari Monastery
 - Svetitskhoveli Cathedral
 - Ananuri castle complex

- Gergeti Trinity Church
- Motsameta Monastery
- Bagrati Cathedral
- Tour the Sataplia caves
- Travel the Caucasus Mountains
- Excursion to Ushguli and Ugvir Pass
- Visit the 9th century Lamaria Church
- Excursion to Katskhi Pillar of Life
- 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
Kazbegi	Rooms Hotel Kazbegi	First Class	4.5
Kutaisi	Hotel Terrace Kutaisi	Superior Tourist	4.5
Mestia	Bapsha Guesthouse	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;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

• **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- 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: GE01TBS22VT

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.