

GORGEOUS GEORGIA MAY 30th – JUNE 8th 2020

A CULTURAL, CULINARY, HISTORICAL & SIGHT SEEING ADVENTURE

Join us in June 2020 for an amazing journey that will take you to a fascinating country. A land of wine and gold, delightful monasteries, castles and cathedrals and spectacular mountain scenery. From the Gardens of the Romanovs to Stalin's birth place; from the magical Saro Fortress to the statue of Medea and the Golden fleece in the land of Kolchhis; this will be an epic adventure.

This rich itinerary will introduce you to the vast diversity of this country: from the warm Black Sea, to perpetually snow-covered peaks of the Greater Caucasus; from fertile valleys full of vineyards, to rocky canyons; from vibrant Tbilisi, to barren plateaus; from futuristic skyscrapers, to primeval rock-hewn towns and picturesque monasteries.

Georgia, however, does not consist only of marvellous nature and historical treasures – it is the motherland of wine and delicious cuisine. Georgian feasts, enriched with poetic toasts, are legendary. Our itinerary includes copious dinners, which will allow you to experience the flavours of Caucasian feasts and hospitality.



TSMINDA SAMEBA (HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY)

Day 1, May 30th Saturday Depart London Gatwick for Tbilisi at 22.55

Day 2, May 31st Sunday CITY TOUR NATIONAL MUSEUM
NARIKALA CASTLE

Arrival in Tbilisi around 06.35 am local time. Transfer from the airport to the hotel. Breakfast. Time for a rest after the flight and then afternoon city tour.



სანური მონეტობილობა. მცხეთა (სვეტიცხოვლის ეზო),
სამარხი № 14, ახ.წ. III საუკუნის დასასრული-IV საუკუნის
დასაწყისი

Writing set. Mtskheta (Svetitskhoveli yard), burial 14, end of the 3rd
century-early 4th century A.D.

კალმები მოთავსებული იყო კოლოფში, რომელსაც
და ოქროს ქვირული ფირფიტა ბერძნული წარწერით.
ოფის ზურგზე ცხრა მუზაა გამოსახული. სახურავზე
მდებარეული იყო ბუდე, რომელშიც ოქროს სამეღნე

The pens were placed in a box bound with a gold open-work
with a Greek inscription. The nine muses are depicted on the
of the box. Fixed to the lid was the case in which a gold in
placed.

In the afternoon we visit the National Museum which has a striking collection of ancient gold treasures. A walking tour of Tbilisi's historical centre with its winding narrow streets, ancient shrines, oriental-style sulphur baths, historical houses with wooden carved balconies. Then we go on a short cable car ride above the old town to the Narikala castle hill. Supper in a local restaurant with live music and an ethnic dance show.



**Day 3, June 1st Monday MTSKHETA SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL
JVARI MONASTERY ANANURI CASTLE GEORGIAN PAMUKKALE**



Sveti Tskhoveli cathedral in old capita, Mtskheta

We visit the city of Mtskheta (former capital of the Georgian Kingdom during antiquity and early middle ages. We visit the magnificent Svetitskhoveli cathedral church, a spiritual heart of Georgia, containing a royal necropolis and numerous important Christian relics. It contains the relics of the apostle Andrew, royal tombs and according to folklore Christ's robe which is buried underground.



After sightseeing in the town, short drive to the 6th-century Jvari monastery built at the top of a nearby hill. Here we can see the old capital from above, lying in the fork of the Kura and Aragvi rivers.



Ananuri Castle

Then a trip through the Georgian Military Road, a mountainous route passing over the top of the Great Caucasus Range. Stopovers include: the 17th century Ananuri castle (on the shore of the blue Zhinvali reservoir); at the viewing platform just below the Jvari Pass (the Cross Pass, 2395 m) we'll see an astonishing panorama of the High Caucasus. Then a short walk on the travertine formation, "Georgian Pamukkale".



In the afternoon we will reach the town of Stepantsminda, lying at the foot of the glacial mount Kazbek. An evening meal and overnight in a hotel in the Great Caucasus.



High Caucasus from the viewing platform

Day 4, June 2nd Tuesday TSMINDA SAMEBA MONASTERY TREK AT FOOT OF MT. KAZBEK (4 HOUR TREK)



Tsminda Sameba – Holy Trinity monastery

Excursion to the Tsminda Sameba (Holy Trinity) monastery (2200m). A monastery which is one the most renowned in the whole of Georgia with a crown of rocky peaks of the Dariali Gorge, snowy Kazbek green gentle alpine meadows below. Around 4 hour trek through alpine meadows to (2900m), then travel back to Tbilisi.

Day 5 June 3rd Wednesday ROCKY CANYON OF KURA RIVER RABAT CASTLE CAVE CITY OF VARDZIA PRE-HISTORIC FORTRESS OF SARO



Rabat Castle, town of Akhal-Tsikhe

We drive to the south of Georgia, to the rocky canyon of the Kura river. We'll visit the Georgian-Turkish castle of Rabat with recently renovated gardens, walls, and golden-domed mosque, then to the medieval cave city of Vardzia (500 chambers carved into the vertical wall of the canyon).



Afternoon trip to the prehistoric fortress of Saro. A fortress as old as legendary Troy or Mycenae, and the time when Georgian tribes were forming their first states. Built directly at the top of the Kura canyon, it allows visitors to admire the spectacular 500-m deep gorge. We then travel to the city of Akhaltsikhe, supper and overnight in a hotel.

Day 6, June 4th Thursday PARK OF THE ROMANOVS HEALING SPRINGS PROMETHEUS CAVE



Borjomi spa park & the healing springs

Visit to Borjomi, famous for its sulphur spring and in the 19th Century a residence of the House of the Romanovs. A short walk in the spa park, a chance to try its healing waters. Transfer to Imereti. Sightseeing in the Prometheus cave: a 1 km long walk inside the cave's impressive chambers,. Supper in a local restaurant, overnight in hotel.



Day 7 June 5th BATUMI BOTANICAL GARDENS DOLPHINARIUM



Travel to Batumi, a coastal resort on the shore of the Black Sea. Visit the 100-year-old botanical garden situated picturesquely at the subtropical Green Cape. It's impressive collection contains thousands of species of plants, i.e. bamboos, palms, great sequoias or thorny succulents. Walk around the city centre with its newly built skyscrapers and coastal promenade. We then visit the statue of Medea holding the Golden Fleece. This part of Georgia in ancient times was known as Kolchis – the land of the golden fleece.



Dolphins' acrobatics show at the local dolphinarium. Supper in a local restaurant. Transfer to Kutaisi, overnight in a hotel.



**Day 8 June 6th Saturday GELATI MONASTERY - THE CAVE CITY OF UPLIS
TSIKHE – GORI & STALIN’S MUSEUM**

We visit the amazing monastery of Gelati. During medieval times it was a University and the place where several Georgian kings were buried. We then drive to Gori (Stalin’s birth place) and visit Stalin’s museum.



This is followed by a visit to the hauntingly picturesque cave city of Uplis Tsikhe {inhabited between 500 BC and 1400 AD}



Then return to Tbilisi for supper and overnight in the hotel.

Day 9 June 7th Sunday KAKHETI & KINDZMARAU LI WINERY VISIT

We visit the valley of Kakheti called the cradle of wine and where the oldest finds of viniculture were found dating back 8000 years! The region produces the majority of Georgian wine and is home to more than 300 endemic species of vine.



Wine producers still follow here an ancient technology of aging wine by keeping it in large clay pots dug into the ground called Kvevri. This way of winemaking is listed as an intangible world heritage by UNESCO.

First we drive to the town of Kvareli, where we'll visit one of the oldest producers of wine, Kindzmarauli Marani and taste 5 types of wine.



At another wine producer, Khareba, we'll visit a 7-km long tunnel where thousands of bottles and barrels are kept.





KINDZMARAULI WINERY

We then proceed to the monastery of Nekresi through a winding and steep road. A historic and mesmerising place built in the 6th century.



In the evening a traditional Georgian feast: the Supra, with poetic toasts, live music, copious amounts of food, wine and other drinks awaits us



Day 10, June 8th Monday

Transfer to Signagi, a beautifully renovated 17th century town. A stroll around it's streets and defensive walls.



Lunch and then transfer to the airport. Departure to London at 19:25

PICTURES FROM LAST TRIP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jqDpJZ5LXU&feature=youtu.be>

FLIGHTS

Recommended flights: Georgian Airways

Saturday May 30th 2020 London Gatwick – Tbilisi 22.55 – 06.35+1

Monday June 8th 2020 Tbilisi – London Gatwick 19.25 – 21.50

COST

£795 (For Payment before February 14th 2020)

£895 (For payment before March 14th 2020)

£995 (For payment after March 14th 2020)

PAYMENT

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Ref: Your name / Georgia May

A minimum of 8 people required to confirm this trip. If interested do book soon.

INCLUDES:

Pick up and drop off at the airport for recommended flights

9 nights stay in hotels (twin share)

Single room supplement available: £175

Transport (air-conditioned minibus or bus) across Georgia

9 Breakfasts and 9 Dinners

With each dinner half a litre of table wine per person

Entry tickets for all visited sites including wine tastings, a dolphinarium show, caves ropeway and 4x4 drive and other attractions

English-speaking tour guide

EXCLUDES:

Airfare

Any other meals except those stated above

Insurance

Any other items not listed above