

Located on the edge of Europe and Asia, Georgia boasts both Mediterranean and European cultures. The country is an amazing cluster of cultures, religions and fascinating landscapes from snowy peaks of the Caucasus mountain range, fertile lowlands, steeps and deserts to wetlands and subtropics.

The UNESCO sites, impressive rock-cut monasteries and cave towns as well as millennia old archaeological sites and remote areas make Georgia an attractive destination. The color and richness typical for Georgian art are expressed in soaring architectural monuments and splendid wall paintings, mosaics and handcrafts. Here you come across the profound evidence of a flourishing culture, which is rich in cultural sites and museums. Georgia is where myth and history, culture and traditions, diverse nature and hospitable people all intermingle with one another, inspired poetry, polyphonic songs and elegant dancing. A blend of cultures, a smell of spices, different nations meeting on street corners, different faiths sharing the same courtyards.

Georgia captures the attention of those with spirit of adventures and a thirst for discovery! This will be an unforgettable experience that will stay with you for a lifetime!

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- See UNESCO World Heritage sites throughout Georgia in Tbilisi, Mtskheta and Mestia
- Enjoy a tour and wine tasting at Georgia's best Wineries in Kakheti
- Explore Kutaisi – the ancient Kingdom of Colchis
- Enjoy traditional Georgian Polyphony singing
- Visit one of the highest villages in Europe and the architecturally unique Middle Age village-fortification - Ushguli
- Discover the famous Batumi Botanical Garden
- Attend private concerts and cultural events exclusively for Cobblestone Freeway travellers



The Journey

Day 1

Welcome to Georgia!

Arriving into Tbilisi you will be met in the airport, and transferred to your hotel.

Check in and take some rest after the long flight, we will then take a brief city orientation, and have a dinner in traditional Georgian restaurant.

Evening at your leisure.

Day 2

After breakfast at the hotel it's time to introduce you to Tbilisi, the city that has been dominated by traders, warriors, tyrants and dictators in turn. Take a walk around the old town and breathe in the living past. We will visit the oldest surviving church in Tbilisi - Anchiskhati Basilica of 6th century, Metekhi Church of Assumption, Georgian Synagogue, Sioni Cathedral and the main citadel of the city where you can enjoy the wonderful views of Tbilisi - Narikhala Fortress.

After lunch we will continue our tour around city with well-known museums and theatres, art galleries, churches and archaeological excavations, Sulphur bathhouses, narrow streets with inner courts, surrounded with balconies decorated with laces, which overhang over abysses.

In the evening enjoy welcome dinner in traditional Georgian restaurant accompanied by folk show!

Day 3

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

On this day we will explore picturesque and the most fertile part of Georgia - Kakheti, which borders the Great Caucasus range from the north Alazani Valley, summits of which are over 3,000 m. This region is known as a birthplace of viticulture and wine-making. The reach land, burning sun and hard work have developed about 500 varieties of vine in Georgia. The history, culture and lifestyle of Georgians are embodied in Georgian wine. It is a symbol of Georgian hospitality, friendship, tolerance and a key to the mystery of Georgian longevity.

Visit Tsinandali Family Estate and wine cellar, which once belonged to the 19th century aristocratic poet Alexander Chavchavadze. The residence consists of summer home, garden and winery, featuring several vintages of white wine. Here we will have lunch with wine tasting.

We drive to Gremi architectural complex of 16th-17th cc. founded by the King of Kakheti Levan. The present complex used to be a citadel and consists of a tower, king's chambers, defensive walls and a central-dome Archangel's church built of square bricks.

We will then travel to Signaghi. Check in to hotel. Evening at your leisure.

Tbilisi – Kakheti – Signaghi

HOTEL:

Rooms Hotel Tbilisi

<https://roomshotels.com/tbilisi/> 2 nights

Kabadoni Hotel Signaghi

<http://www.kabadoni.ge/> 1 night



Day 4

After breakfast at the hotel and check out it's time to explore Sighnaghi - fortified town famous for its wine and carpet making culture. Enjoy breathtaking views of Kizikhi area and unusual Charm of Sighnaghi Royal Town. Have a walk in narrow streets of the town in shadow of wooden balconies richly decorated with the lace of carved ornaments.

We will have lunch in local winery with wine tasting!

We will then visit Bodbe Nunnery (9thc), the place where St. Nino, the 4th.c female evangelist of Georgians is buried.

Travel back to Tbilisi. Upon arrival - check-in to your hotel and have free evening for your leisure.

Day 5

After breakfast at the hotel and check out we will travel to Mtskheta - the ancient capital of Georgia, located at the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers.

Visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Jvari, the 6th century cross-shaped monastery built on the top of a cliff, overlooking the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers. At this place St. Nino, a female evangelist, erected a large wooden cross on the site of a pagan temple; Svetitskhoveli, the fortified cathedral dating from the 11th century. Svetitskhoveli is a sacred place where the Robe of Christ is buried.

Next we will travel to Kutaisi – the ancient Kingdom of Colchis and the second largest city of modern Georgia. We will visit Bagrati Cathedral, the 11th century cathedral, built during the reign of King Bagrat III and known as “the symbol of united Georgia”.

We will then check-in to hotel and have evening at your own leisure.

Day 6

After breakfast at the hotel we will visit Gelati Monastery built in 11 century by the famous king of Georgia, Davit the Builder. Gelati Complex includes an academy and remained for a long time one of the main cultural and enlightening centers in Georgia. The Gelati Monastery has preserved a great number of manuscripts dating back to the 12th c. and is listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Next we visit Prometheus Caves - 1.2km-long cave complex providing breathtaking examples of stalactites, stalagmites, curtains, petrified waterfalls, cave pearls, underground rivers, and lakes. Its unique features include a variety of halls and landscape diversity. Here you can enjoy a 280 meter boat tour on the underground lake in the cavern.

We travel through the Enguri Gorge where the first inhabitants, mainly gold prospectors, settled in the ancient times. It was here, that most of the Colchis gold was obtained. For centuries the Svan ethnic group was cut off from the outside world and for this reason their culture preserved almost intact.

Overnight at the hotel in Mestia.

HOTEL:

Rooms Hotel Tbilisi

<https://roomshotels.com/tbilisi/> 1 night

Kutaisi Hotel TBC

1 Night



The Journey

Day 7

Breakfast at the hotel.

Then we will have Mestia sightseeing tour - visit Margiani house-museum where you can see typical Svan house and the tower. Next - walking tour in Mestia. Visit Historical-Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, which houses manuscripts from the 10th and 12 centuries, religious tracts from the 9th-11th centuries, icons, metal and other artifacts of the 14th-16th centuries, gold coins of the antique and late antique periods, and several Bronze Age treasures.

We will have dinner with special guests joining us – enjoy Svan local polyphony group singing!

We promise – you will be impressed!

Day 8

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today we will travel to Ushguli - one of the highest villages in Europe and the architecturally unique Middle Age village-fortification, surrounded by the 5000m giants of the Caucasus Mountain Range. Ushguli and the whole Upper Svaneti is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Typical Svanetian protective towers are found throughout the village. According to the legend, it was in the Ushguli towers that the Georgian monarch and saint, Queen Tamar (12-13th c.) had her summer and winter residences. We will also visit Lamaria Church. Locals believe Queen Tamara, who was a central figure in Svans history, was buried under this church.

Return back to Mestia and have evening at your leisure.

Day 9

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

Visit Dadiani Palace in Zugdidi - a castle-like building from the 17th to 19th centuries. The museum houses one of Napoleon Bonaparte's three bronze death masks, acquired via a 19th-century marriage between a Dadiani and a descendant of Napoleon's sister.

Drive towards Batumi.

We will arrive in Batumi, one of the oldest cities in Georgia and inhabited from as early as the third century BC. Batumi is mentioned by Greek and Roman sources as one of the Black Sea's principal ports.

Arriving to Batumi, check-in to your hotel. Evening at your leisure.

Mestia - Ushguli - Batumi

HOTEL:

Old Seti Hotel, Mestia

<https://www.101hotels.ru/georgia/mestia/hotel-old-seti.html> 3 Nights

World Palace Hotel Batumi

<http://www.batumiworldpalace.com/>
2 Nights



Day 10

After breakfast at the hotel it's time to explore the beautiful Batumi!

We will visit seaside park and old-city district with lots of cafes, shops and churches, streets of Old Batumi, decorated with ornaments of nameless mythical creatures, Batumi Sea Port, Piazza Square, statue of Medea and Governmental buildings.

After lunch we will visit famous Batumi Botanical Garden, located 9 km from Batumi. The garden occupies 111 hectares of hilly land, composed partially of red soils. Garden consists of the following floristic sections: Transcaucasian humid subtopic, New Zealand, Australian, Himalayan, East Asian, North American, South American, Mexican, and Mediterranean. With this excursion you will get a chance to see beauty of flora from all over the world and enjoy an amazing view of the Black Sea.

Evening at your leisure.

Day 11

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

Explore Samtskhe - Javakheti region. The region is named after two of the original Georgian tribes - the Meskh and Javakhs. It is considered as the cradle of Georgian culture. The road leads past arid and stone-terraced landscapes, green valleys littered with centuries old fortresses. The climate and cool water springs are healthy here and landscapes are impressive.

Visit Rabati castle, developed under the influence of different cultures. The castle includes a Church, a Mosque, a Minaret and a Synagogue.

Arrive in Vardzia.

Overnight at the hotel in Vardzia.

Day 12

Breakfast at the hotel.

Continue our trip and visit Vardzia Cave Complex, founded in the 12th-13th cc. during the reign of Giorgi III and Queen Tamar. The complex became a well-fortified monastery, which had a significant role in political, cultural, educational and spiritual life of Georgia.

Visit Poka nunnery complex and enjoy cheese tasting; cheese is produced by nuns on the territory of monastery.

Drive to Tbilisi across the highlands of Javakheti plateau. En route short stop at Paravani lake.

Overnight at the hotel in Tbilisi.

HOTEL:

Valodias Cottages Guesthouse Vardzia

<https://www.facebook.com/valodias.cottage>

1 Night



Day 13

Breakfast at the hotel.

Free day for individual exploration and shopping.

In the evening we will get together for the farewell dinner - polyphony ensemble will join us at traditional restaurant. Group will feel the atmosphere of Georgian dinner party, with traditional songs and the speeches of “Tamada” – toast master!

Day 14

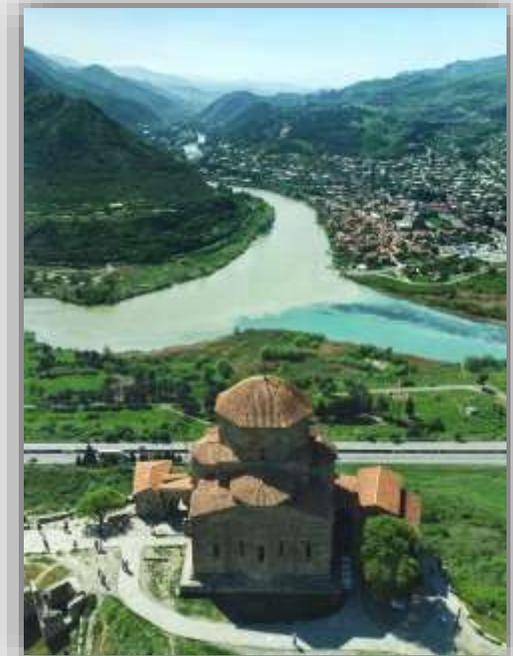
After a free morning to stock up on souvenirs we will transfer you to the airport where, sadly, we will have to say our goodbyes!

Thank you for travelling with Cobblestone Freeway!

HOTEL:

Rooms Hotel Tbilisi

<https://roomshotels.com/tbilisi/> 2 Nights



Tour Details

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Airport Transfers for tour start and end dates
- Escorted tour from beginning to the end with full time Tour Leader
- All Events included in the Itinerary
- 2 big meals a day
- All land transportation in an air conditioned quality bus with professional driver
- 13 nights in comfortable character rich 3 & 4 star hotels and quality villas
- Internet in hotels when possible
- Special events exclusively for Cobblestone travellers
- Cobblestone Freeway t-shirt

NOT INCLUDED:

- Extra days before/after the tour
- Events and Services not included in the itinerary or marked as Optional
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Meals not listed on Itinerary
- Travel Insurance
- Laundry & Telephone Services



OPTIONAL ADD-ONS:

- Extend your trip
- Upgrade your room / Get a single room
- Do a side trip – visit Family, have your Family History researched

*Unforeseen events and new discoveries may result in changes to this itinerary, but only for the better!