JOURNEY TO THE CAUCASUS

13 DAYS - LIMITED EDITION JOURNEY - MAX GROUP: 18 GUESTS

PRICE: FROM $9,495 PER PERSON

This fascinating journey to the heart of the Caucasus offers a surprising taste of old world Eastern European charm. Bridging East and West, these former Soviet Republics boast thousands of years of history, jaw-dropping scenery and a rich cultural heritage. Armenia was one of the first countries to adopt Christianity, and there are magnificent churches in abundance in the most unexpected locations. Neighbouring Georgia lays claim to the world’s oldest wine industry and, on this journey, rare skin-fermented wines stored underground in clay jars are uncorked and savoured. The food throughout the region is delicious and hearty and, in many places, there’s a delightfully unspoiled medieval vibe.

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

• Wander through the historic heart of Tbilisi’s old town
• Prepare lavash in time-honoured fashion in a local home
• Sip wine from earthenware pots in the world’s oldest vineyards in the Kakheti region
• Uncover medieval history at the Haghpat and Sanahin monastic complexes
• Witness a spiritual vocal performance in an ancient monastery
• Float across the high altitude waters of Lake Sevan on a private boat trip
• Taste Armenia’s noble brandy at a Yerevan distillery
• Meet local artisans and traditional carpet manufacturers in colourful markets and workshops

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Abercrombie & Kent
YOUR ITINERARY
JOURNEY TO THE CAUCASUS
13 DAYS - LIMITED EDITION JOURNEY

Day 1: Arrive Tbilisi, Georgia. Arrive into the Georgian capital and this evening join your Resident Tour Director and fellow travellers for a cocktail briefing on the adventure ahead. Tbilisi Marriott Hotel

Day 2: Tbilisi | An Assortment of Architectural Styles. Tbilisi is a surprising blend of cultures. Your adventure starts with a walk through the cobbled streets of the atmospheric old town. Visit the 12th century Metekhi Church and a 19th century Jewish synagogue. Admire the old Georgian houses with their distinctive wooden, curved balconies and the Sioni Cathedral. You’ll see the oldest surviving church in Tbilisi before getting a bird’s-eye view of the city from the Narkala Fortress, which can be accessed by cable car or on foot. On the way back down, stop at the Sulphur Baths and the National Museum of Fine Arts. Tonight is a chance to savour some of Georgia’s finest cuisine at a favourite traditional restaurant. Tbilisi Marriott Hotel | Meals: BLD

Day 3: Tbilisi | Design Your Day. Start the day at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia with its extraordinary collection of gold filigree work. Continue to the Georgian National Centre of manuscripts for a private visit with a specialist to talk about important restoration work. Time during the day to visit the Sukhoi Bridge open air market. This afternoon, enjoy one of these Design Your Day activities:

> Experience an Artisan Introduction to the ancient technique of cloisonné (decorative enamelwork).
> Join an Architectural Expert for a Walking Tour around the city.

Tbilisi Marriott Hotel | Meals: BL

Day 4: Kakheti | Birthplace of Winemaking. Explore the most picturesque part of Georgia – Kakheti, which borders the Great Caucasus range. This area is the birthplace of viticulture and winemaking, admire the profusion of vineyards and beautiful churches as you drive through. Stop at the 9th century Bodbe Nunnery before arriving at the pretty fortified town of Sighnaghi, famous for its wine and carpet making. Meander through the narrow streets before lunch with a local family serving up traditional dishes from the region, and of course matching wines. Before returning to Tbilisi visit the grand Tsindali estate, once home to the noble Chavchavadze family and noted for its historic winery. Tbilisi Marriott Hotel | Meals: BL

Day 5: Mtskheta | Medieval Religious Architecture. The World Heritage site of Mtskheta is your first stop today. Georgia’s cultural and religious centre, it is also one of the country’s oldest towns. Visit the early medieval Jvari Church and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. Heading along the Georgian Military Highway, take in the Ananuri Architectural complex, with churches and towers dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. Arrive into the sleepy town of Kazbegi later this afternoon where views of Mt. Kazbek are breathtaking – especially from your hotel room. Rooms Hotel Kazbegi | Meals: BL

Day 6: Kazbegi | Gergeti Holy Trinity Church. This morning, head for the beautifully situated 14th century Gergeti Holy Trinity Church which perches high on a hill overlooking the town and the surrounding mountain scenery. Get up close by 4WD or, for the more energetic, on foot. More traditional Georgian hospitality today over lunch with one of the local families. This afternoon, enjoy the stylish Nordic atmosphere of the hotel before sundowners on the terrace. Rooms Hotel Kazbegi | Meals: BL

Day 7: Tbilisi | Heart of Georgia. Today’s adventure is to the fertile Kartli province with a stop in Gori, the birthplace of Joseph Stalin where a controversial museum traces his life. For lunch today, enjoy traditional dishes with local wine. Tbilisi Marriott Hotel | Meals: BL

Day 8: Dzoraget, Armenia | Byzantine Monasteries. Farewell to Georgia this morning, crossing into Armenia at the Sadakhlo border. Stop at the Haghpat and Sanahin monastic complexes on the way to your remote medieval-style hotel situated beside the Debed River on the main road from Tbilisi to Yerevan. A traditional dinner of Armenian cuisine is arranged this evening. Avan Dzoraget Hotel | Meals: BLD

Day 9: Dilijan | Little Switzerland. Travel to the spa town of Dilijan, with its beautiful mountain scenery and unique architecture, to visit the Haghartsin Monastery which is tucked away in a valley to the northeast. Afterwards, head to Lake Sevan, the largest body of water in Armenia and the Caucasus region, where a boat trip is included, before continuing on to the Armenian capital. Yerevan stretches along the banks of the River Hrazdan, under the wistful gaze of Mount Ararat. Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan | Meals: BL

Day 10: Yerevan | In the shadow of Mount Ararat. Your introduction to the capital begins with a guided tour of the city, one of the world’s oldest continuously inhabited metropolises. See the beautiful Government buildings, the Central Post Office and banks. Visit the State History Museum as well as the Cafesjian Modern Art Museum which exhibits collections of Armenian and international contemporary artworks. Discover why Armenian brandy is world famous at a specially organised VIP tasting at the Yerevan brandy factory. There is also time this afternoon to pore over the stalls at the Vernissage flea market, a short walk from the hotel. Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan | Meals: BL

Day 11: Yerevan | World’s Oldest Cathedral. A morning visit to Etchmiadzin Cathedral for holy mass. This ancient cathedral is headquartered for the Armenian Orthodox church. Later, take in the nearby ruins of the 7th century Zvartnots Cathedral before lunch at the family owned Megeryan Carpet Factory and Museum. Get comfortable as you admire the exquisite handmade carpets before a traditional Armenian lunch in the rustic, but atmospheric, restaurant. Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan | Meals: BL

Day 12: Geghard & Garni | Temple and Monastery. The morning begins with a spiritual vocal performance in the acoustic hall of the ancient Geghard Monastery. Afterwards, a visit to the pagan Temple of Garni, which dates to the Hellenistic era. Built around 77 AD, it is the only Greco-Roman colonnaded building in the country. Afterwards, take part in a centuries-old Armenian cultural tradition at a hands-on lavash making ceremony, followed by lunch in a local home. A farewell dinner is held tonight. Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan | Meals: BLD

Day 13: Depart Yerevan. Transfer to airport for departure flight. Meals: B