



Georgia, Armenia & Azerbaijan



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HIKERS, SVANETI P82, GEORGIA



FLAME TOWERS P211, BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

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Itineraries



South Caucasian Highlights

You can get a basic taste of all three countries in two weeks, but do organise your Azerbaijan visa well in advance. Arrive in **Baku**, the ever-more glitzy Azerbaijani capital. Spend a couple of days exploring the art galleries and Old City core, plus make an excursion to **Qobustan** and the mud volcanoes. Take the night train to lovely **Saki**, then hop west via **Zaqatala** into Georgia's wine region, Kakheti. Stop in **Signaghi** and drive on to the Georgian capital via the **Davit Gareja** cave monasteries. Spend three days in lovely **Tbilisi**, including an excursion to the old Georgian capital **Mtskheta**. Next head up to **Kazbegi** for two or three days' walking in the spectacular Great Caucasus.

Return to Tbilisi and head south into Armenia, hopping to the border via Marneuli and Sadakhlo then taking a taxi to the World Heritage monasteries of **Haghpata** and **Sanahin**. Continue from **Alaverdi** to the capital **Yerevan** with its wine bars and museums. Add excursions to **Garni Temple** and to **Geghard** and **Khor Virap** monasteries.



Caucasus Summer Hiking

Spend a few days in **Baku**, contrasting its world-beating 21st-century architecture with the medieval charm of its Unesco-listed Old City. Remember to register your Azerbaijani visa. As well as **Qobustan**, explore the offbeat **Abşeron Peninsula** with its fire phenomena, castle towers and oil-industry debris. Then head north to the mountain village of **Xinaliq** via the carpet-making town of **Quba**. Return to Baku and strike out northwest to quaint **Lahic**, a good village base for summer walks and local encounters. Continue to lovely **Saki** with its muralled khan's palace and caravanserai hotel, and consider adding days in other pretty Caucasus foothill villages such as **İlisu** above Qax, or **Car** near Zagatala.

Enter Georgia at **Lagodekhi** and explore the classic wine region of **Kakheti** from a base at **Telavi**. Take the rough summer-only road to Omalo in remote **Tusheti** and, assuming you have a tent and decent fitness, hike (four days) from there to **Shatili**, ideally employing a horse to carry your backpack. Get driven to Roshka and make the strenuous day-hike to Juta en route to spectacular **Kazbegi**. Recharge with creature comforts in fabulous **Tbilisi** before another summer-only fix of mountains, spectacular valleys and fortified villages in **Svaneti**. Or hop across country for seaside fun at the quirky Black Sea resort of **Batumi**, visiting **Uplistsikhe**, Stalin's home town of **Gori**, and historic **Kutaisi** on the way. Two possible routes sweep back to fortress-dominated **Akhaltzikhe**, the longer but easier one via the old-world spa town of **Borjomi**, gateway to the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park. From Akhaltzikhe, don't miss an excursion to the cave city of **Vardzia** before entering Armenia. Enjoy the cafe life of **Yerevan**, along with day trips to regional monasteries and **Garni Temple**, then head into southern Armenia. In around four days you could visit the **Yeghegnadzor** area (monasteries, lovely walks and wineries) and spectacular **Tatev** via slow-paced **Goris**. Goris is also the starting point for side trips to into the beautiful but highly disputed breakaway territory of Nagorno-Karabakh with its 'capital' at **Stepanakert**. Karabakh's Janapar Trail is a delightful village-to-village hiking route taking in castles and old churches. Return to Tbilisi via **Alaverdi** and the monasteries of **Haghpate** and **Sanahin**.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS

Alex Jones

Azerbaijan The Azerbaijan chapter was written by an experienced Lonely Planet writer who has been visiting Azerbaijan and Georgia for two decades. He has chosen to use a pseudonym due to political and cultural sensitivities in the region. Alex also wrote the Plan Your Trip and Survival Guide sections.



Tom Masters

Nagorno-Karabakh Tom studied Russian at the University of London and first visited the Caucasus in 1999 on an extended escape from a provincial university study course in the Arctic. He's been back many times since then, in his work for the BBC World Service's Caucasus & Central Asian Service and as author of the Georgia and Azerbaijan chapters for a previous edition of this book. For this edition, he returned to Nagorno-Karabakh to find the region safe and thriving. You can find more of his work at www.tommasters.net.



Virginia Maxwell

Armenia Although based in Australia, Virginia spends much of her year travelling in the Middle East and Mediterranean Europe. The author of Lonely Planet's *Istanbul* and *Pocket Istanbul* guidebooks, she also co-authors the *Turkey*, food and *Iran* guidebooks, so knows this part of the world very well. This is the first time she has updated Armenia but she hopes it won't be the last.



John Noble

Georgia John, from the UK, first came to Georgia in 1990 when he was writing Lonely Planet's first (and last) guide to the USSR. Arriving in Georgia at Kazbegi was like a breath of fresh air after Soviet regimentation and he has loved Georgians' sense of independence, hospitality, beautiful landscapes and architecture, food and of course wine ever since. This is the third time he has covered the country for this book. John also wrote the Understand section.

Read more about John at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/ewoodrover>

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