

MB TRAVEL TOUR

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Azerbaijan-Georgia Spring for 2019

Baku - Absheron Peninsula - Shemaka – Sheki– Lagodekhi – Alaverdi – Telavi– Ikalto – Shuamta – Tbilisi– Mtskheta – Dzalisi – Tbilisi

9 Days, 8 overnights

- 1 Day: Baku arrival**
- 2 Day: Baku - Absheron Peninsula**
- 3 Day: Baku - Shemaka – Sheki**
- 4 Day: Sheki – Lagodekhi – Alaverdi – Telavi**
- 5 Day: Telavi – Ikalto – Shuamta – Tbilisi**
- 6 Day: Tbilisi –City tour**
- 7 Day: Tbilisi – Mtskheta – Dzalisi – Tbilisi**
- 8 Day: Tbilisi**
- 9 Day: Tbilisi departure**

Day 1, 26 May 2019 Sunday:

Arrival in Baku (-/-/-)

Meet the driver and transfer to hotel.

Overnight at the hotel in Baku.

Day 2, 27 May 2019 Monday : Baku - Absheron Peninsula – Baku (B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Tour starts with the view of Baku city, its harbor, boulevard zone and the Caspian Sea from Martyr’s Lane. Martyr’s Lane is a memorial park located on one of highest hills of the city, is composed of a tomb standing on an 8-pointed star crown of gold-framed glass dome.

Elegant network decorating the walls of the tomb gives certain gentleness and air of transparency to the monument. Golden dome shining in nocturnal sky embodies the spirit of martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the independence of Azerbaijan (time to be spent 40 min - 1 hour).

We will now move to the Old City of Baku "Icheri Sheher", which is a rare pearl of ancient cultural heritage of Azerbaijani people. Also, it is the historical center of ancient Baku, the former capital of the State of Shirvanshahs and a millennial statehood of Azerbaijan. Here, in a small area of 22 hectares you can see hundreds of historic monuments. In 2000, "The Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah's Palace and Maiden Tower" were included in to the UNESCO World Heritage list. Icheri Sheher is a romantic place, which transports you to the Middle Ages, makes you live the spirit of the time and its positive energy. Main sites of this tour are:

Shirvanshah’s Palace (15th century) - the last residence of Shirvan's rulers, located at the highest point of Icherisheher, the palace was founded in the

12th century and its construction was finalized in the 15th century. The Palace of Shirvanshah’s inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List is rightly considered as a 'Baku Acropolis'. For many centuries the Maiden Tower has been the most prominent piece of the Baku panorama. It is located

in the southeast of Baku city fortress, and stands as a 28-meter cylinder. Its bottom part, constructed in the 8th-9th centuries, could have been used as an ancient religious temple,

although mainly, it was used as an observatory, a lighthouse and a watchtower in subsequent centuries.

A number of other historical sites (Muhammad Mosque, baths of Haji Banu, Agha Mikayil and Gasim Bey, Multani and Bukhara caravanserais, small caravanserai, two-floor caravanserai, fortress walls, Gosha Gala (double gates of the city) and etc.) are also located on this route. At the end you can walk along the central streets of the city and enjoy shopping (time to be spent in the old town - 2 or 2,5 hours).

Visiting the new building of the Azerbaijan State Carpet Museum will amaze you with its vast collection of more than 10.000 items. The museum contains valuable historical artifacts and works of art from cities and regions, covering the whole centuries old history of Azerbaijan, as well, of course, carpets and rugs with national ornaments and subjects specific to the various schools of carpet weaving of Azerbaijan: with pile (khalcha, khali, dest khali, gebe), pileless carpets (palas, kilim, chechim, sumakh, shedde, varni, zili), as well as variety of carpet objects- khurjun, chul, kheyba, mafrash, ekhar gashlygy, and others. We must mention that in November 2010 "Traditional art of Azerbaijani carpet weaving in the Republic of Azerbaijan" was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative list of the Intangible Cultural heritage of Humanity. Aside from carpets woven in 17th – 20th centuries, a collection of jewelry, ceramics and old metal works is also a part of the exhibition (time to be spent – 1 hour).

Continue the tour by driving to Absheron peninsula. Located in Surakhani district (25 km away from Baku), UNESCO World Heritage Site “Ateshgah (Fire- Worshippers Temple)” is an ancient religious temple of fire worshipers built in 17th century. This castle-like place has been described by many foreign travelers and historians. It is one of the sacred places Zoroastrians (fire worshipers) used to visit and still do during their pilgrimage (time to be spent - 40 min).

Upon arrival back to city center, have a pleasant walk on the heart of modern Baku – Fountain Square. This area, alongside with the famous Nizami street, is a huge pedestrian zone with many coffee shops, restaurants, pubs, bars and shops. Fountain Square is basically the most favorite place for locals to have dates, business meetings and to celebrate any kind of events. Lunch and dinner independent.

Overnight at the hotel in Baku.

Day 3, 28 May 2019 Tuesday : Baku - Shemaka – Sheki (B/-/-)

After the breakfast - departure to Sheki. One the way, visit Diribaba Mausoleum, a unique and sacred place built inside the rocky mountain in Maraza district in early 15th century. Afterwards, continue to Juma Mosque (Friday Mosque) of Shamakhi city (120 km away from Baku) is the second earliest mosque built in Caucasus (year 743-744). As a result of serious damages and demolitions caused by earthquakes and battles, this mosque was reconstructed several times.

Late at the day arrive in Sheki. Sheki Khan’s Palace is one of the major historical sites in Azerbaijan. Built in late 18th century as a summer palace, it is the only remaining structure from the larger splendid complex once surrounded by the fortress walls. Among its main attractions are the outstanding drawings and stained-glass windows, which are assembled as a puzzle without a single nail or usage of glue. One square meter of this artwork consists of 4.000 small parts and can range up to 14.000 in more complicated styles (time to be spent – 1 hour).

Upper and Lower Caravanserais of Sheki (18th century) served as a temporary homes for traders who were passing by this city which was on one of the Silk Road routes. Both are huge magnificent structures consisting of more than 300 hundred rooms covering a total area of 6000- Upper Caravanserai and 8000- Lower Caravanserai square meters (time to be spent – 1 hour).

Later, visit the Kish church in the outskirts of Sheki, which is located in Kish village. Its narrow streets and cobble stone roads, alongside with warm people will be an amazing experience.

Transfer to hotel, overnight in Sheki.

**Lunch and dinner independent.
Overnight at the hotel in Sheki.**

**Day 4, 29 May 2019 Wednesday : Sheki – Lagodekhi – Alaverdi - Telavi (B/-/-)
(Independence Day of Georgia)**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Early check-out from hotel and drive to the Lagodekhi border.

After passing the customs check meet local guide and driver.

In Alazani valley visit elegant 11th c. Alaverdi Cathedral, founded by the Assyrian monk Joseph Alaverdeli, who settled in a former pagan village and converted people to Christianity.

Visit local farmers market in Telavi, where you can enjoy the large variety of fruits and vegetable, meat, cheese, etc. Here you can find all ingredients Georgians use for cooking.

Lunch and dinner independent.

Overnight at the hotel in Telavi.

Day 5, 30 May 2019 Thursday: Telavi – Ikalto – Shuamta - Tbilisi (B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Visit Ikalto monastery, founded by Saint Zenon, one of the 13 Syrian Fathers, in the late 6th century. According to a legend the famous 12th century Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli studied there.

Visit Old and New Shuamta. The meaning of Shuamta is „located between the mountains“– which clearly refers to the secluded but picturesque location of the convent in the Gombori forests. The monastery complex includes a basilica from the 5th century and two churches with domes, both from the 7th century. In the 16th Century the Old Shuamta monastery was abandoned. New Shuamta Monastery was built by Tinatin, the wife The King Levan II. The Church was built out of brick and is located not far from Old Shuamta. The walls are decorated with frescoes. The Church was restored by Irakli II.

Drive to Tbilisi.

Lunch and dinner independent.

Overnight at the hotel in Tbilisi.

Day 6, 31 May 2019 Friday : Tbilisi sightseeing tour (B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Here 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.... This is 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. Today Tbilisi is a modern city with well-known museums and theatres, art galleries, churches, Sulphur bathhouses and narrow streets with inner courts.

Sights to visit:

- Metekhi Church of Assumption (13th c.) built by the king Demetre II. Resting upon the top of the hill, the church is a good example of cross-domed Georgian orthodox churches.

- Georgian Synagogue - Jewish prayer house built from 1895 to 1903.

- Sioni Cathedral (6th-19th cc.). The cathedral was the seat of the ruling Catholicos-Patriarchs and is commonly referred to as the “Tbilisi Sioni”, following an old Georgian custom of naming churches after places in the Holy Land.

- Anchiskhati Basilica (6th c.) – the oldest surviving church in Tbilisi.

- Narikhala Fortress - the main citadel of the city where you can enjoy the wonderful views of Tbilisi.

- Sulphur Baths - high in sulphurs and other minerals, with a constant temperature of 38C to 40C, the waters have long been used as a therapeutic aid for a range of ailments.

- **Rustaveli Avenue - the central avenue in Tbilisi named after the medieval Georgian poet, Shota Rustaveli.**
Lunch and dinner independent.
Overnight at the hotel in Tbilisi.

Day 7, 1 June 2019 Saturday : Tbilisi – Mtskheta – Dzalisi – Tbilisi (B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning we drive 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

Visit Archaeological site Dzalisi, located in the Mukhrani Valley. Which consists of several layers from the Bronze Age (3rd-2nd Millenium BC).

Drive to Tbilisi.

Lunch and dinner independent.

Overnight at the hotel in Tbilisi.

Day 8, 2 June 2019 Sunday: Tbilisi (B/-/-)

Free day for leisure.

Lunch and dinner independent. No guide and transportation service.

Overnight at the hotel in Tbilisi.

Day 9, 3 June 2019 Monday: Departure Tbilisi (-/-/-)

Check out till 12:00 noon.

Transfer to Tbilisi Airport for departure.

Package price based on double/twin room accommodation:

For group of:

2 peoples price per person \$2130.00 (transportation by sedan)

4 peoples price per person \$1855.00 (transportation by minivan)

6 peoples price per person \$1595.00 (transportation by minivan)

10 peoples price per person \$1370.00 (transportation by minivan)

14 people price per person \$1255.00 (transportation by bus)

Single Supplement \$550.00 per person

PRICE INCLUDES:

2x overnights at hotel Shah Palace 4* (or similar) in Baku

1x overnight at hotel Sheki Saray in Sheki

1x overnight at hotel Old Telavi 3* (or similar) in Telavi

4x overnights at hotel Kalasi 3* (or similar) in Tbilisi

Catering: as per program (B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner)

All breakfast at the hotels.

All transfers and transportation by comfortable vehicle per group size, except DAY 8.

An English/Russian-speaking guide as per program, except DAY 8.

Entrance fees

1 bottle of water per person per day

PRICE EXCLUDES:

Entrance Visas.

Meals except mentioned above

Alcohol beverages

Airline tickets

Travel insurance

Porters

Early Check in/Late Check out

Services except described