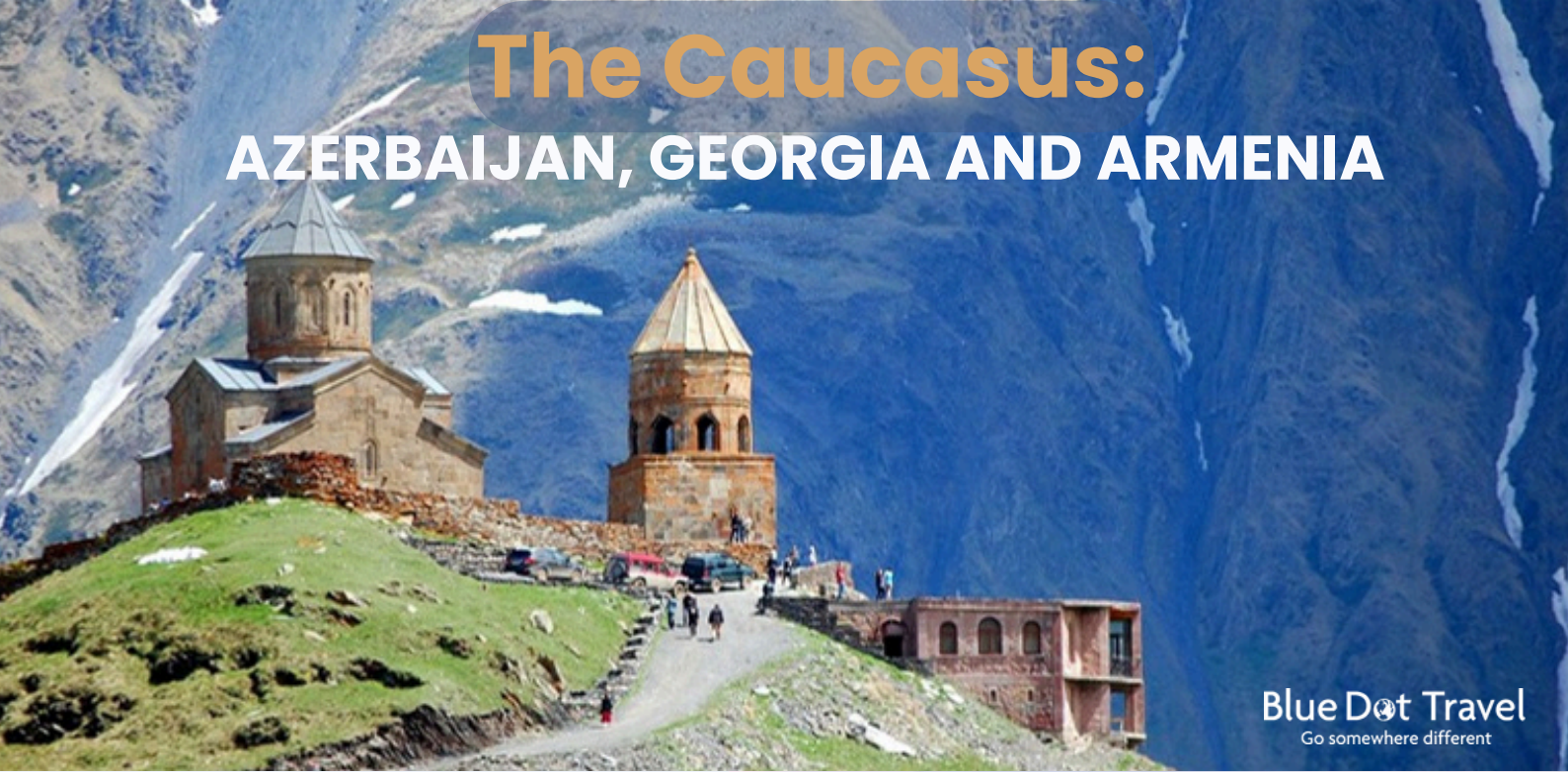


The Caucasus:

AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA AND ARMENIA



Blue Dot Travel
Go somewhere different

September 2026 | 27 Days

\$11,750 per person, twin share

Single Supp: \$2,000

Tour Highlights

- The region's natural beauty – mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes
- Medieval villages where the way of life has not changed for decades
- The region's warm and friendly people
- UNESCO-listed sites throughout the region – monasteries, towns and monuments.
- Ancient, medieval and modern history



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Tour overview

At the crossroads of Asia and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus is a fascinating region few travellers explore. From Azerbaijan to Georgia and Armenia, expect breathtaking beauty, rich culture and centuries of living history.

On this small group journey, you'll traverse snow-capped mountains and glaciers, dine with local families, and visit UNESCO-listed monasteries and churches.

From the vibrant capital city of Baku to the historic charm of Sheki, Azerbaijan is a land of striking contrasts. Its rich history stretches back to prehistoric times, as evidenced by Stone Age human settlements. The UNESCO-listed rock carvings of Gobustan illustrate the daily lives and rituals of ancient Azerbaijani communities. Once a vital part of the Great Silk Road, Azerbaijan's modern economy thrives on its abundant oil reserves, and Baku's skyline resembles a vision of the future, with sleek glass towers and innovative architecture.

Cradled between Europe and Asia, Georgia's mix of natural beauty, medieval history and warm hospitality makes it one of travellers' favourite destinations. The capital, Tbilisi, has a modern European vibe, cosy cafes, art galleries and theatres. Yet, leaving the city feels like travelling in medieval times, amongst palaces, castles, and rock-hewn villages. Ancient Mtskheta is home to several UNESCO-listed sites, the 12th-century cave monasteries of Vardzia are simply fascinating, and the iconic Gergeti Trinity Church sits like a postcard against the spectacular Caucasus mountain ranges.

Lesser-travelled Armenia is a country rooted in tradition and hospitality, with dramatic landscapes from high-altitude lakes to forested national parks. You'll meet warm-hearted locals in its smaller villages, then be swept up in Yerevan's atmosphere, with its boulevards, Soviet-era architecture and lively café culture. Known as the cradle of Christianity, Armenia features several significant religious sites and spectacular views of the sacred Mt Ararat.

The Caucasus is an unspoiled tourism region that is fast becoming a favourite amongst our travellers, so now is the time to visit!



Activity rating: Moderate to Active

You must be capable of walking up to 10,000 steps daily; ascending 3-4 flights of steps; standing at attractions for 1-2 hours; boarding and disembarking transport unaided and handling your own luggage.



Departure, Saturday 29th August

Depart for Baku, Azerbaijan. We'll provide you with a customised flight itinerary.

Day 1, Sunday 30th August BAKU

On arrival, we'll be transferred to our hotel in Baku, where we'll stay for four nights. After checking in, we'll take a brief orientation walk along the waterfront to stretch our legs after the flight. We'll visit Highland Park, situated on a hill with fantastic views of the city, then join for a Welcome dinner.

Overnight: Baku **D**

Day 2, Monday 31st August DAY TRIP TO GOBUSTAN

Today we'll travel to Gobustan to explore its well-preserved rock art — over 4,000 petroglyphs that trace human history from the Upper Paleolithic era to the Middle Ages — a vivid record of life spanning 15,000 years. We'll visit the interactive Gobustan Museum, which explains the region's ancient flora, fauna, and culture and the unique mini mud volcanoes just North of the city. We'll continue to Ateshgah, the "Place of Fire," where natural gas once burned eternally. This temple was sacred to Zoroastrian worshippers, one of the world's oldest religions, which originated in ancient Azerbaijan.

Overnight: Baku **B/D**

Day 3, Tuesday 1st September BAKU

Baku is a city of contrasts! This morning, we'll visit the old city, with its fortified walls, karvansarays, mosques, historic buildings and labyrinth of narrow cobbled streets. Then we'll visit the landmark of modern Baku, the Heydar Aliyev Centre, built by world-famous architect Zaha Hadid. There'll be free time to explore the centre, before meeting for dinner. Overnight: Baku **B/D**

Day 4, Wednesday 2nd September DAY TRIP TO GUBA & KHINALIQ

Today's journey takes us north to Guba, nestled on the northeastern slopes of majestic Mount Shahdag in the Greater Caucasus, and once the capital of the medieval Guba Khanate. Nearby, we'll visit Krasnaya Sloboda, a Mountain Jewish community established in the 18th century under the protection of the Quba Khanate. Weather permitting, we'll continue to the ancient mountain village of Khynalyg, perched 2,350 metres above sea level. One of the most remote settlements in the Caucasus, it offers a rare glimpse into a way of life unchanged for centuries, with its timeless stone houses and breathtaking views of snow-capped peaks. Return to Baku after this long but fascinating day in the mountains. Overnight: Baku **B/D**

Day 5, Thursday 3rd September BAKU – LAHIJ – SHEKI

Today we'll drive north-west, where dense forest mountains replace the dry landscape around Baku. We'll visit Lahij, a beautifully preserved 2,000-year-old village once thriving along the ancient Silk Road. Renowned for its skilled coppersmiths—whose craft is recognised by UNESCO—Lahij was the hub of traditional Azerbaijani artistry. We'll wander its narrow cobblestone streets, where some workshops are still in use, then continue past breathtaking mountain scenery to Sheki.

Overnight: Sheki **B/D**

Day 6, Friday 4th September SHEKI

This morning, we'll explore the mountain city of Sheki, once a thriving silk centre and a key stop on the legendary Silk Road. We'll visit the 18th-century Khan's Summer Palace, featuring magnificent frescoes and exquisite stained-glass work. At a local "Shebeke" workshop, watch master craftsmen create intricate glass mosaics by hand. Then visit a local baklava maker and tea house to experience true Azerbaijani hospitality. Our afternoon concludes at the Albanian church, in the nearby village of Kish, believed to be the first Christian church in the Transcaucasus region. Overnight: Sheki **B/D**

Day 7, Saturday 5th September SHEKI – TBILISI, GEORGIA

After breakfast, we'll drive to the Georgian Border to be collected by our new guide. Be prepared for a 1km walk through no-man's land with your luggage. Our first stop is the 18th-century town of Signaghi, with its well-preserved five-kilometre-long fortified wall, which remains intact today. Modern Signaghi is a beautiful architectural site that combines Georgian and Italian design elements. You can walk through the parks and cobbled streets, lined with local handicraft studios and markets. On our way to Tbilisi, we'll visit a local wine cellar, where you can sample various varieties of Georgian wines. Overnight: Tbilisi **B/D**

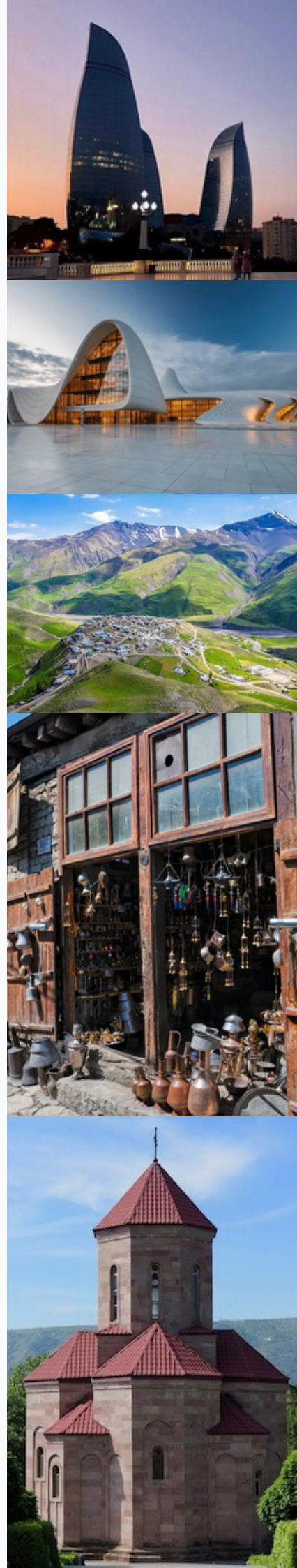
Day 8, Sunday 6th September TBILISI

Tbilisi, Georgia's vibrant capital, blends ancient history with modern charm. We'll visit the National Museum and Sameba Cathedral, enjoy the lively atmosphere of Shardeni Street, with its cosy cafés, and explore the cultural heart of Tbilisi along Rustaveli Avenue. Finally, we'll explore the Old Town, where a mix of Georgian, Persian, Russian, and Armenian influences is visible in its architecture. (Note: There will be free time to explore Tbilisi later in the itinerary.) After dinner, we'll take a short walk across the Freedom Bridge to see the city lights by night. Overnight: Tbilisi **B/D**

Day 9, Monday 7th September TBILISI – MTSKHETA – KAZBEGI

This morning we'll drive to Mtskheta, Georgia's ancient capital and a UNESCO World Heritage site. We'll visit the 11th-century Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, said to hold Christ's robe, and the 6th-century Jvari Monastery perched dramatically on a rocky mountaintop. We'll continue along the scenic Tergi River, passing the impressive Ananuri Castle and the Jinali Reservoir, and arrive in Kazbegi.

Overnight: Kazbegi **B/D**



Day 10, Tuesday 8th September KAZBEGI

Kazbegi is a picturesque mountain town surrounded by the towering peaks of the Greater Caucasus. Today we'll travel by 4WD vehicles to the iconic Gergeti Trinity Church, located at 2170m. On a clear day, the area offers stunning views of Mount Kazbek, which rises to 5046 m. Afterwards, we'll drive to the Dariali Gorge for a short trek to Gveleti Waterfall. On return, there'll be some free time before we join a local family for a Khinkali (Georgian dumpling) cooking demonstration. Overnight: Kazbegi **B/D**

Day 11, Wednesday 9th September KAZBEGI – GORI – UPLISTSIKHE – KUTAISI

For early risers: grab your camera for a beautiful photo of the sun rising on Mt Kazbek! Today we'll visit the 11th-century city of Gori and the Joseph Stalin Museum, which includes his personal train and the small house where he was born and raised. Next, we'll explore Uplistsikhe, an ancient rock-hewn town known as "The Lord's Fortress." Carved into the cliffs above the Mtkvari River, it dates back to around 2000 BC and was inhabited through the Middle Ages. (Walking through the cave system involves around 700 stairs and 2km in narrow sections and tunnels. Please consider the suitability, as there is the option to wait at the café below.) We'll continue to Kutaisi, Georgia's former capital. Overnight: Kutaisi **B/D**

Day 12, Thursday 10th September KUTAISI

We'll spend the day exploring Kutaisi, one of Georgia's oldest and most storied cities. Highlights include the majestic Bagrati Cathedral and the Gelati Monastery, a 12th-century masterpiece of the Georgian Golden Age and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Once the capital of the ancient Colchis kingdom, Kutaisi reclaimed its political importance in 2012 with the construction of Georgia's striking new parliament building, designed by Spanish architect Alberto Domingo Kabo. Overnight: Kutaisi **B/D**

Day 13, Friday 11th September KUTAISI – MESTIA

We'll continue our scenic journey through the Samegrelo Region to the Martvili Canyon. The 700-metre trail along the historic Dadiani path offers fantastic views from its bridges and limestone steps, before we join our boat ride through the canyon's turquoise waters. Our drive continues into the stunning Svaneti Mountains, passing mountains and glaciers. (Consider some snacks for the trip, as there aren't many places to stop for lunch). We'll stop at the towering 271-metre Enguri Dam, which creates a reservoir in the picturesque gorges of Samegrelo and Svaneti, before arriving in Mestia. On arrival, we'll visit the Machubi Museum. Overnight: Mestia **B/D**

Day 14, Saturday 12th September MESTIA

Today we'll travel by 4WD jeeps to the spectacular Chalaadi glacier. This 3.5-hour walk is only for active travellers, with some sections rated as difficult. Those not up to the walk can stay at the lodge or visit the lovely local township. On the way back, we'll stop at Heshkili Huts, a great spot to buy lunch with a view. There'll be some free time in the afternoon, and a great tip is to watch the local Georgian movie "Dede" in the small café/cinema near the centre of town. Your guide will provide details. Overnight: Mestia **B/D**

Day 15, Sunday 13th September DAY TRIP TO USHGULI

Cameras ready! The scenery just keeps getting better as we drive by 4WD jeeps to UNESCO-listed Ushguli, a community of four villages at 2200m. We'll have lunch at a local guesthouse and learn how to make the local specialty of cheese and kubdari. If you have the chance, take a walk through the villages and meet some of the locals. Heading back, we'll visit the 12th-century St George's church, then stop at one of the local ski resorts for panoramic views of the area (weather permitting). On return to Mestia, we'll visit the local ethnographic museum. Overnight: Mestia **B/L**

Day 16, Monday 14th September MESTIA – BATUMI

Leaving the mountains, we'll travel to the Black Sea and the waterfront city of Batumi. (It's almost opposite Istanbul if you look due west). We'll stop for a pick-up lunch en route, arriving in the early evening. Batumi's brightly lit skyline contrasts with the views of Mestia and is worth seeing after dark. Among the city's artworks, the most notable is "Ali and Nino" by Georgian sculptor Tamara Kvesitadze, featuring two towering figures formed from interlocking metal discs. As they glide toward each other, they embrace in a fleeting kiss before passing through one another and drifting apart, tragically representing a Muslim boy and a Christian girl torn apart by war and faith. Overnight: Batumi **B/D**

Day 17, Tuesday 15th September BATUMI

With its location on the Black Sea, Batumi has been shaped by several cultures and feels both European and uniquely Georgian. Today we'll stroll the tree-lined waterfront and lively promenade, with its growing food and cafe scene. We'll walk through the expansive botanical gardens (approx 2 hours with some uphill and downhill sections) and take in the stunning views. In the afternoon, we'll take a short boat trip on the Black Sea. Overnight: Batumi **B/D**

Day 18, Wednesday 16th September BATUMI – BORJOMI

Today is another travel day, as we head to the spa town of Borjomi, nestled in the forests of Southern Georgia. On arrival, we'll stroll around the small township with its gardens and waterfall. Make sure you try the "unusual" warm spring water. The town developed around naturally occurring hot sulphur pools, and swimming in them is said to be highly beneficial for health, so bring your swimwear. From Borjomi Central Park, the walk to the pools is around 3km each way, and there is a cafe and changing rooms available. Overnight: Borjomi **B/D**



Day 19, Thursday 17th September DAYTRIP TO VARDZIA & AKHALTSIKHE

Today we'll visit Vardzia, a 12th–13th century rock-hewn complex on the bank of the river Mtkvari. Once a strategic fortress, the complex evolved into a well-fortified monastery and the cultural centre of medieval Georgia. At its heart lies the Church of the Assumption, adorned with exquisite frescoes. (Please note: the route includes uphill sections and cave walking, which may be challenging for some. Even with the local minibus, you can expect a 500 m uphill walk.) We'll have lunch in Vardzia, then drive to Akhaltsikhe to visit the impressive 9th-century Rabati fortress, before returning to Borjomi. Overnight: Borjomi **B/L**

Day 20, Friday 18th September BORJOMI – TBILISI

This morning we'll drive back to Tbilisi. On arrival, you're free to explore Tbilisi according to your interests. You may choose to shop, mix with the locals or do some more sightseeing. There are plenty of options, and your tour leader can provide advice. (This day of leisure is not guided or hosted.) We'll meet back together for dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight: Tbilisi **B/D**

Day 21, Saturday 19th September TBILISI – DILIJAN, ARMENIA

This morning we'll transfer to the Armenian border. Again, there is a walk through no-man's land of approx. 500m, before we meet our Armenian driver and guide. We'll travel to the UNESCO-listed Haghpat Monastery, a magnificent medieval complex perched halfway up a mountainside, with its oldest chapel dating back to before 1000 AD. When the clouds lift, the views across the valley are breathtaking. From here, we continue to Dilijan, a charming mountain town in northern Armenia. After a leisurely stroll along cobblestoned Sharambeyan St., we'll settle in for dinner. Overnight: Dilijan **B/D**

Day 22, Sunday 20th September DILIJAN AND SURROUNDS

It is time to relax and enjoy our beautiful mountainous surroundings, beginning with a visit to nearby Parz Lake in Dilijan National Park. We'll visit Haghartsin Monastery, built between the 10th and 13th centuries and nestled in a verdant valley amidst stunning scenery. After visiting the monastery, we'll take a hike (approx 1.5 hours) to the Haghartsin waterfall. We'll return to Dilijan, where we can relax at the hotel or visit the local museum. Overnight: Dilijan **B/D**

Day 23, Monday 21st September DILIJAN – SEVAN – YEREVAN

This morning, we'll travel to Lake Sevan, one of the world's largest high-altitude lakes at 2000 metres above sea level. Discover the beautiful church on the hilltop (about 250 steps up) against the backdrop of the spectacular lake. We'll have a short coffee stop before continuing to Garni, a pagan Temple built in the 1st century and the Symphony of Stones, a natural basalt rock formation. We'll visit a local family's home for lunch (Abelyan's House) and a bread-making demonstration. It's a short drive to the 13th-century Geghard Monastery, and listening to the local choir perform in these age-old acoustics is a delight. Finally, we'll continue to Armenia's capital, Yerevan. Dinner is at leisure tonight, with many great local options. Overnight: Yerevan **B/L**

Day 24, Tuesday 22nd September YEREVAN AND SURROUNDS

Today, we'll take a short drive to Khor Virap Monastery, which holds immense religious significance with locals as the birthplace of Christianity in Armenia. It also offers spectacular views of the sacred Mount Ararat (now located on Turkish soil). Returning to Yerevan, we'll take a short walking tour, including Republic Square and the Opera House, then visit the Ararat Brandy Factory, established in 1887. With its historic buildings and cellars, it's not just for brandy enthusiasts but a place to learn about the rich tradition of brandy production. Your evening is free to explore this vibrant city. A good tip is to head to the "Cascades" park to watch the world go by as the sun sets over the city. Overnight: Yerevan **B**

Day 25, Wednesday 23rd September DAY TRIP TO GYUMRI

We'll travel to Gyumri today, a city characterised by charming cobblestone streets, buildings adorned with intricate carvings, and ornate churches. It still has many traditional 19th-century houses, and we'll visit a museum in one of them to learn about traditional life. We'll also visit the gallery of the Aslamazyan sisters, known locally as the Armenian "Frida Carlos". Gyumri offers a look at Armenia's cultural soul beyond Yerevan – creative and storied. We'll return to Yerevan in the late afternoon. Overnight: Yerevan **B/D**

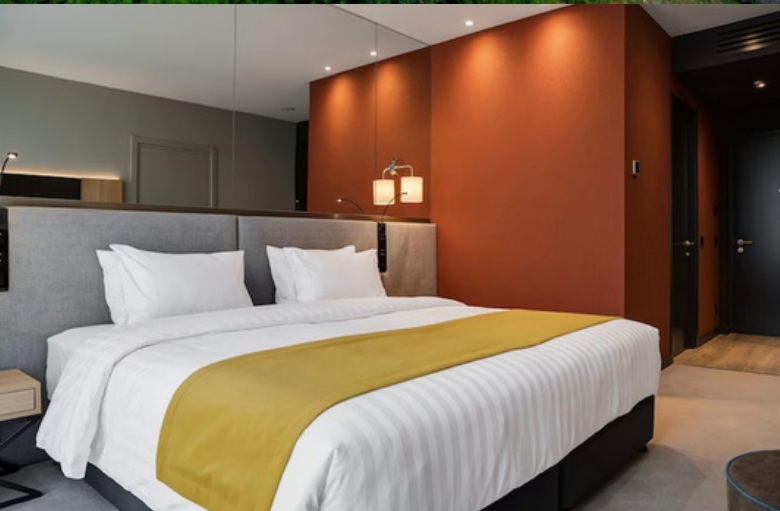
Day 26, Thursday 24th September YEREVAN AND SURROUNDS

We'll continue our sightseeing in Yerevan today, covering any areas we didn't see earlier. We'll visit the Genocide Museum, which can be very emotional but is a must-see as it's a significant part of the country's recent history. Just outside the city lie the UNESCO-listed monuments Ejmiatsin and Zvartnots. Founded in 303, Ejmiatsin Cathedral is the seat of the Armenian Catholicos and the spiritual centre of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Nearby, the 7th-century Zvartnots Temple—now in ruins—is noted for its distinctive circular design, unique in medieval Armenian architecture. Finally, we'll visit the fascinating manuscript museum, home to one of the world's richest repositories of medieval documents and ancient manuscripts. We'll share a farewell dinner this evening, after our final day of the tour. Overnight: Yerevan **B/D**

Day 27, Friday 25th September DEPARTURE

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**





Accommodation

Our hotels are carefully chosen to capture the local atmosphere and set you up in an ideal location. You can expect accommodation that comprises a mix of standard hotels, boutique-style hotels, and smaller, independently owned establishments. Below are sample hotels on this tour:

Midtown Hotel, Baku
www.midtownhotel.az

Rooms Hotel, Kazbegi
www.roomshotels.com/kazbegi

Crowne Plaza, Borjomi
www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/borjomi

Glarros Old Town, Tbilisi
www.glarros.ge

Why Blue Dot?

Travel is more than just moving from one place to another; it is an opportunity to explore this vast planet, connect with its people and marvel at its beauty. We have established a group of loyal, like-minded travellers who share this feeling and have taken multiple tours with us. With Blue Dot, you'll experience

- Thoughtfully designed itineraries with unique experiences
- Small, inclusive groups with a maximum of 16 travellers on most tours, and often fewer
- The support of both an Australian tour leader* and experienced local guides
- Programs designed to meet the needs of mature-age travellers
- Hands on, personalised service including customised flight bookings
- Tipping included in your tour cost

*Australian leaders accompany groups with more than 10 travellers.

Blue Dot welcomes solo travellers

In fact, over half of our clients are solo travellers. We understand it can be daunting to travel on your own, and we'll ensure your travel is inclusive and enjoyable, while prioritising your safety. You can confidently join our groups, knowing that we bring solo travellers together to share the camaraderie of an unforgettable adventure.

Enquiries and bookings

A \$500 deposit is required to secure your booking.

For more information:



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