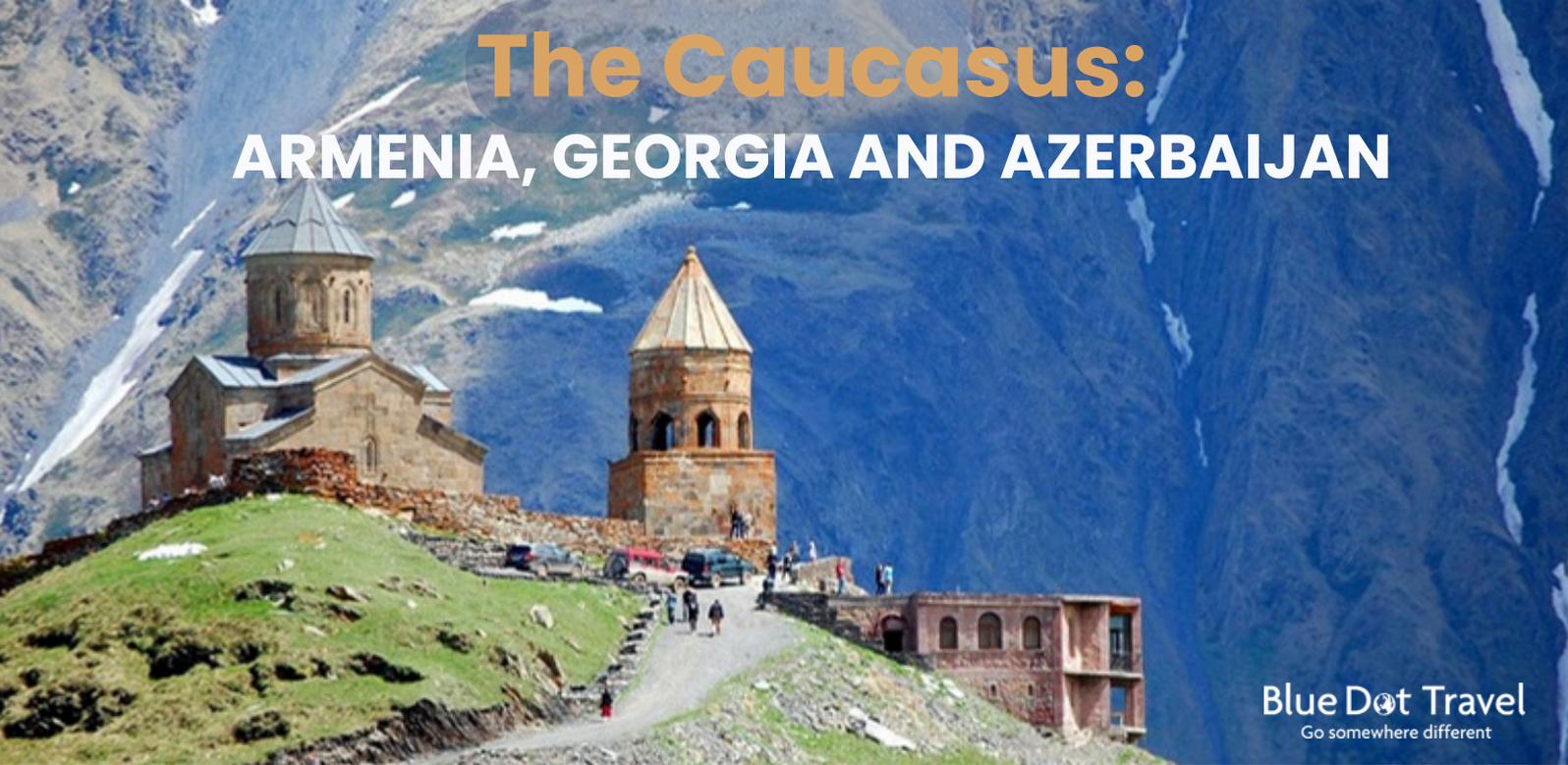


The Caucasus:

ARMENIA, GEORGIA AND AZERBAIJAN



Blue Dot Travel
Go somewhere different

May 2027 | 27 Days

\$12,300 per person, twin share
Solo Supplement: \$2,200

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



The Caucasus: ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AND AZERBAIJAN

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 wide 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, Friday 7th May

Depart for Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. We will provide you with an individualised flight itinerary for your trip.

Day 1, Saturday 8th May 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, followed by our Welcome dinner. Overnight: Baku **D**

Day 2, Sunday 9th May 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 3, Monday 10th May 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 4, Tuesday 11th May 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, Wednesday 12th May 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. 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, Thursday 13th May 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, Friday 14th May SHEKI – KAKHETI, 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. After the border crossing, we'll visit a local wine cellar to sample some of Georgia's world-renowned wines. We'll continue to Gremi, the former capital of the Kakheti Kingdom in eastern Georgia, thriving in the 16th century as another key trading hub on the Silk Road. Its hilltop citadel, church, and ruins of its caravanserai are part of a fascinating archaeological complex. We'll continue to the laid-back town of Telavi, set among the vineyards with the Caucasus Mountain range in the backdrop. Overnight: Kakheti **B/D**

Day 8, Saturday 15th May KAKHETI – KAZBEGI

This morning we'll visit the Alaverdi Monastery, a masterpiece of Georgian architecture from the 11th and 12th centuries. We'll then drive into the mountains on a stunning journey along the Tergi River, passing the impressive Ananuri Castle and the Jinali Reservoir, to Kazbegi. This picturesque mountain town is surrounded by the towering peaks of the Greater Caucasus. Overnight: Kazbegi **B/D**

Day 9, Sunday 16th May KAZBEGI

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 cooking demonstration of Khinkali (Georgian dumplings). Overnight: Kazbegi **B/D**



Day 10, Monday 17th May KAZBEGI – MTSKHETA – TBILISI

For early risers: grab your camera for a beautiful photo of the sun rising on Mt Kazbek! This morning we'll travel 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. Continue to Tbilisi, Georgia's vibrant capital.

Overnight: Tbilisi **B/D**

Day 11, Tuesday 18th May TBILISI

Today we'll explore Tbilisi, which 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. After dinner, we'll take a short walk across the Freedom Bridge to see the city lights by night. Overnight:

Tbilisi **B/D**

Day 12, Wednesday 19th May TBILISI – GORI – UPLISTSIKHE – KUTAISI

Leaving Tbilisi, 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 13, Thursday 20th May 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 14, Friday 21st May 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 15, Saturday 22nd May 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 16, Sunday 23rd May 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 17, Monday 24th May 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 18, Tuesday 25th May BATUMI – BORJOMI

With its location on the Black Sea, Batumi has been shaped by several cultures and feels both European and uniquely Georgian. This morning, we'll walk the tree-lined waterfront and lively promenade, then the expansive botanical gardens (approx 2 hours with some uphill and downhill sections) with its stunning views. We then have an afternoon of driving, as we head to Borjomi, arriving in the evening. Overnight:

Borjomi **B/D**



Day 19, Wednesday 26th May **BORJOMI**

Borjomi is a spa town nestled in the forests of Southern Georgia. After breakfast, we'll have a relaxed morning, taking a 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. We'll visit the pools in the afternoon, so pack your swimwear. From Borjomi Central Park, the walk to the pools is around 3km each way. There is a cafe, and changing rooms are available. Overnight: Borjomi **B/D**

Day 20, Thursday 27th May **BORJOMI - AKHALTSIKHE - VARDZIA**

Today we'll drive to Akhaltsikhe to visit the impressive 9th-century Rabati fortress, then continue to Vardzia, a 12th-13th-century rock-hewn complex on the bank of the Mtkvari River. 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.) Overnight: Vardzia **B/D**

Day 21, Friday 28th May **VARDZIA - GYUMRI, 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 continue to Gyumri, a city that offers a look at Armenia's cultural soul beyond Yerevan — creative and storied. Depending on our travel time today, we may have time to wander the charming cobblestone streets, with their ornate churches and architecture, before dinner. Overnight: Gyumri **B/D**

Day 22, Saturday 29th May **GYUMRI - DILIJAN**

Gyumri still has many traditional 19th-century houses, adorned with intricate carvings. This morning 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". We will have free time for lunch before continuing to Dilijan, a charming mountain town in northern Armenia. Overnight: Dilijan **B/D**

Day 23, Sunday 30th May **DILIJAN - SEVAN - YEREVAN**

This morning, we'll visit Haghartsin Monastery, built between the 10th and 13th centuries and nestled in a verdant valley amidst stunning scenery. Returning to Dilijan, we'll take a leisurely stroll along cobblestoned Sharambeyan St., before heading to Lake Sevan. One of the world's largest high-altitude lakes, it sits at 2000 metres above sea level. Discover the beautiful church on the hilltop (about 250 steps up) against the backdrop of the spectacular lake. Finally, we'll continue to Armenia's capital, Yerevan. Overnight: Yerevan **B/D**

Day 24, Monday 31st May **YEREVAN AND SURROUNDS**

Today we'll explore the area around Yerevan, beginning with Garni, a pagan Temple built in the 1st century and then 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. Returning to Yerevan, we'll 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. Overnight: Yerevan **B/L**

Day 25, Tuesday 1st June **YEREVAN**

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 Genocide Museum. This can be very emotional, but it is a must-see as it's a significant part of the country's recent history. 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 26, Wednesday 2nd June **YEREVAN**

We'll continue our sightseeing in Yerevan today, covering any areas we didn't see earlier. 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, Thursday 3rd June **DEPARTURE**

After breakfast, transfer to Yerevan Airport for your homeward-bound flight or to your next destination. **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 some of the hotels on this tour. Final hotels may change, and a complete list will be shared with you.

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.

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