

GEORGIAN SIGHTSEEING

TBILISI

Georgia's ancient and vibrant capital city spreads out on both banks of the Mtkvari River, and is surrounded on three sides by mountains. The most widely accepted variant of the legend of Tbilisi's founding says that in the mid-5th century AD, King Vakhtang I Gorgasali was hunting in the heavily wooded region with a falcon. The King's falcon allegedly caught or injured a pheasant during the hunt, after which both birds fell into a nearby hot spring and died from burns. King Vakhtang became so impressed with the hot springs that he decided to cut down the forest and build a city. The name Tbilisi derives from the Old Georgian word —tbili—, meaning warm. Archaeological studies of the region indicate human settlement in the area early as the 4th millennium BC.

Sulfur Baths and Old Tbilisi tour



The bath district is called “Abanotubani” and is on the south side of the Metekhi Bridge. It catches one's eye immediately with its small, brick domes on ground level. The sulfur waters are naturally warm and in a way represent the icon of the city since the well-known legend of how Tbilisi was founded is associated with the warm springs of the sulfur waters.



One of the Must-Dos and probably the most distinctive pleasures of visiting Tbilisi is wandering through the Old City, with its old-style balconies, ancient churches, winding, narrow streets, and charming shops. Here one will notice a number of eclectic sights – sites ranging from churches to mosques and synagogues, as well as the art galleries lining along the way.



One of the most famous, oldest and most favored historic sites of Tbilisi. It was established in the 4th century and was considerably expended over subsequent centuries. Much of what remains today dates from the 16th and 17th centuries. The initial name of the fortress was “Shuris-Tsikhe” (Invidious Fortress) and was later renamed by Mongols as “Naria Qala” literary translated as a “Little Fortress”. The complex is mostly in ruins and consists of two parts – upper and lower sections.

Metekhi Church

Was built by the Georgian king Demetre II around 1278-1284 years. It is represented as an unusual example of domed Georgian Orthodox Church although it was damaged and restored multiple times. The church is situated at the top of the hill overlooking "Abanotubani" and the river Mtkvari. During the Soviet era the church lost its religious purposes, was demolished and later in 1819 was replaced by a new building that functioned as a jail. In the later part of Soviet period the church was used as a theatre. In the late 1980s Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia Ilia II launched a campaign of restoration of Metekhi Church which restarted functioning.

Mtatsminda



Literary translated as a "Holy Mountain" is a 770 m. high plateau situated in the center of Tbilisi right across the main avenue of the city. It was named after St. David Garedzhi who lived as a recluse in a cave on one of the slopes of the mountain. The mountain is topped by a Television Tower (276m.), a beautiful building (restaurant) at the end of the funicular railway.

The Bridge of Peace



The Bridge which stretches 150 meters (490 ft) over the River Mtkvari, connecting Old Town of Tbilisi with the new district. The official opening took place on May 6, 2010. Providing a unique view of Metekhi Church, Narikala Fortress and statue of city's founder Vakhtang Gorgasali on one side and Baratashvili Bridge and Presidential Palace on the other. The bridge a design of which reminds of a marine animal has a curvy steel and glass canopy top which shimmers with an interactive light display at night, generated by thousands of white LEDs.

Open air Museum of Ethnography



The Giorgi Chitaia Open Air Museum of Ethnography is an open-air museum in Tbilisi, Georgia, displaying the examples of folk architecture and craftwork from various regions of the country. The museum is named after Giorgi Chitaia, a Georgian ethnographer, who founded the museum on April 27, 1966. Since December 30, 2004, it has been administered as part of the Georgian National Museum.

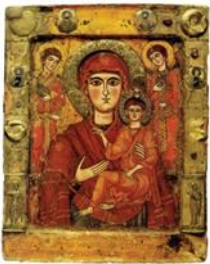
Museum of Georgia



The origins of the museum of Georgia stem from the foundation of the Russian Royal Geographic Society's Museum of the Caucasian Department in 1852. In 1921 the Georgian Menshevik government decided to relocate state treasures from Georgian Museums and Churches out of Tbilisi due to Bolshevik aggression towards Georgia. The treasure was moved to Kutaisi first, then to Batumi, although eventually was packed in 248 boxes and transported to France. In spite

of great obstacles, the famous Georgian public figure Ekvtime Takaishvili preserved and safely returned the treasures to Georgia at the end of the Second World War.

Treasure of the Museum of Fine Arts



The treasury at the Georgian Museum of Arts was founded in the second half of the 19th century, and developed further in the early 20th century, creating a centerpiece for the Georgian National Treasury. The majority of the materials presented in its exhibitions are the works of Georgian Masters. The treasury preserves and presents works from the Bronze Age, Antic-Hellenistic, and medieval periods, as well as significant modern artifacts up through the 20th century.

Rustaveli Avenue



Is the central avenue of Tbilisi named after the medieval Georgian Poet Shota Rustaveli. The Avenue starts at Freedom Square and is extended along for about 1.5 kilometers. Rustaveli is considered as the main thoroughfare of the city due to a wide variety of governmental, public, cultural as well as business buildings lined along the avenue such as: the former Parliament of Georgia building, Kashveti Church, the Simon Janashia

Museum of Georgia (part of the Georgian National Museum), the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Rustaveli State Academic Theatre, the Georgian Academy of Sciences and many others. Rustaveli Avenue is a mixture of the 20th century architecture and is generally considered as a promenade place where everyone should go at least once, to take a walk and feel the spirit of this city. This wide boulevard is shaded and has an adventurous character provided that the interesting buildings, smaller shops restaurants and art galleries are located there sometimes even offering outdoor exhibitions, performances and events.

Agshmeshenebeli Avenue



Renovated part of one of the old regions of Tbilisi with its cozy cafes, walking areas and European style neighborhood is one of the attractions where people are chilling and enjoying warm days and outdoor activities. Small houses, with traditional Georgian style of balconies are in synthesis with colorful buildings and European cafes.

MTSKHETA-MTIANETI

Mtskheta Tour (Distance from Tbilisi 25 Km)



One of the oldest cities of Georgia is located about 20 kilometers north of Tbilisi at the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers. The city is considered to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and today is populated by around 19 500 people. The town has an extraordinary importance to the Georgian Nation as it was the capital of the eastern Georgian kingdom of Iberia from the 3rd century BC to the 5th century AD. Mtskheta was the site of Georgia's adoption of Christianity in 334 and remains to be one of the headquarters of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Mtskheta is of primary interest to any visitor interested in Georgian history and/or Orthodox Christianity. Due to its historical significance and numerous ancient monuments, the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta" became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. The historic churches of Mtskheta are outstanding examples of medieval architecture in the Caucasus. They represent the high artistic and cultural level attained by this ancient kingdom.

Jvari Monastery (Distance from Tbilisi 26 Km)



"The Church of the Holy Rood" is situated on top of the hill on the left bank of the Aragvi River. According to local history, in the early fourth century a wooden cross was erected over a pagan sanctuary on a rocky mountaintop overlooking Mtskehta, the former capital of the Georgian Kingdom of Kartli - Iberia. The construction of the cross symbolized the fall of paganism and rise of Christianity in Georgia. In 545, a cruciform church, known as the Small Church of Jvari, was built just north of the cross. Between 586 and 605, a larger church was constructed directly above the site of the wooden cross, the base of which is still visible inside the church. In 2004, the monastery was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta" and was added to the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger in 2009.

Uplistsikhe (Distance from Tbilisi 102 Km)



Name of the place Uplistsikhe translates as “Gods Fortress”. But city itself is ancient, carved in rock, dating back at least 2.7 millennia. To this date city is full of mystery, when you walk there you can let your imagination run wild and picture everything from everyday life, to some mystical rituals that might have been performed there by ancient pagan priests. This place full of mystery and is right in the heart of Georgia.

Ananuri Fortress (Distance from Tbilisi 67 Km)



Ananuri Fortress - The fairy tale Ananuri ensemble is beautifully situated on the Georgian Military Highway, on the shore of the azure blue Zhinvali reservoir. Zurab Aragveli, who is responsible of building much of what is now seen, was a ruthless local prince known for attacking neighboring mountain clans and even blinding his own brother. In spite of this, the complex he produced rates as one of the top sites of Georgia, with two churches and a watchtower squeezed almost impossibly inside massive defensive walls with four huge battlements. The fortress was built between 1661-1676 years and has been a shelter to many during various invasions. The fortress has always had a strategic importance for a range of reasons including its location.

Gudauri (Distance from Tbilisi 120 Km)



Ski resort located on the southern slopes of The Greater Caucasus Mountain Range in Georgia. The resort is situated in the Stepantsminda District, along the Georgian Military Highway near the Cross Pass, at an elevation of 2,196 meters (7,200 ft.) above sea level. The resort offers high quality skiing opportunities. The slopes of Gudauri are completely above the tree line and are best for free-riders and are generally considered to be avalanche-safe. The ski season lasts from December to April. Heli-skiing is also available throughout the season.

Gergeti Trinity Church (Distance from Tbilisi 156 Km)



This architectural complex from the XIV century is located in the village of Gergeti, 6 km from the town of Stepantsminda, at a height of 2200 m. The complex includes Holy Trinity Cathedral, constructed in the XIV century, the bell tower built in the XIV century, and clergy houses from the XV century. You can hike up to the complex in about two hours, hire a driver, or even rent a horse!SAMTSKHE JAVAKHETI.

Vardzia (Distance from Tbilisi 260 Km)



A cave monastery in southern Georgia excavated from the slopes of the Erusheti Mountain on the left bank of the Mtkvari River. The main period during which the city was constructed is known to be the second half of the 12th century. The caves stretch along the cliff for 500 meters and in up to 19 tiers. The monastery was established in the city later, during the Golden Age of Queen Tamar, which grew into a virtual holy city housing perhaps 2000 monks. The church itself dates back to the 1180s and has an important series of wall paintings. The site was largely abandoned during the Ottoman takeover in the 16th century. Now part of a state heritage reserve, Vardzia has been submitted for the future inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Rabath (Distance from Tbilisi 210 Km; distance from Vardzia 60 Km)



Capital and biggest town of Samtskhe-Javakheti region. Akhaltsikhe means “New Castle” when translated from Georgian. In fact, far from being new, the castle that dominates the town dates from the 12th century. The local power in Akhaltsikhe from the 13th to 17th centuries was the Jakeli family, but from 1688 until 1828 it was the center of an Ottoman administrative area governed by a pasha and later in 19th-20th centuries it became part of the Russian Empire.

KVEMO KARTLI

Dmanisi museum-reserve (Distance from Tbilisi 104 Km)



Discover the first European homeland.

Dmanisi Historical and Architectural Museum-preserve. The first European country to introduce the history, the Dmanisi archeological excavations in the 20-minute documentary film. Dmanisi Museum-Reserve is a unique place of amazing discoveries that have changed the whole concept of the human evolution, where the medieval settlement, Late Bronze and Early Iron Age archaeological layers. Arrival at the end of the tour.



Dmanisi skull found in the territory of the five prehistoric hominids. None of the monument on the balance with so many prehistoric hominids have been found. Discovered in Dmanisi hominid skeleton parts, extinct animal well-preserved skulls and stone tools of about 1, 7-1, 8 million years.

KAKHETI

Gombori Pass- Picturesque Road to Kakheti

Ikalto Monastery



This monastery, beautifully situated in a cypress grove 8km northwest of Telavi, was one of two famous medieval Georgian academies, the other being Gelati. Shota Rustaveli, the national poet, is thought to have studied here. The monastery was founded in the 6th century by Zenon, one of the 13 Syrian fathers. Six hundred years later, King David the Builder invited the philosopher Arsen Ikaltoeli to establish an academy here, where the doctrines of Neoplatonism were expounded. In 1616 the complex was devastated by the Persians.

Alaverdi – Tour



The Cathedral is the second tallest religious building in Georgia located at the height of over 55 meters. Was built by Kakhetian king Kvirike in the 11th century. Royal temple of Alaverdi has always been the place of worship for Kings of Georgia. Archeologists have uncovered ancient cellar dating back to the VIII century, containing up to 50 various sized “qvevris” (ancient clay vessels used to store wine). Today, the monks of the monastery still make their own wine using methods preserved in the country for centuries.

Gremi



Standing above the green valley of Alazan, Gremi attracts travelers whose road goes between Telavi and Kvareli. Gloomy and monumental, the castle is the one of the most visited tourist look that it has up to present day was built in the 16th century in the times of King Levan of Kakheti, who announced Gremi the capital of the Kingdom of Kakheti.

Khareba - Kvareli Gvirabi (under the mountains of Great Caucasus)



The area is in the center of the Kakheti wine producing region, and the town itself is known for its Kindzmarauli wine, a semisweet red variety. Once in Kvareli, one can visit a wide variety of vineries and wine-cellars mostly run by local wine-makers. The tunnel was dug out of the flank of the Greater Caucasus Mountains near Kvareli in Kakheti. It has a natural temperature of 12-14°C throughout the year, ideal for storing and ageing wine.

- Visit wine cellar-tunnel;
- Tasting of different sorts of factory wine “Khareba” some of the wines, making churchkhela (is a traditional sausage-shaped candy originating from the Caucasus region. It is a very popular food, combining two of Georgia’s favorites – grapes and nuts);
- Bread making

Tsinandali



A village in Kakheti region (79 km east of Tbilisi) noted for the estate and the historic winery which once belonged to the 19th century aristocratic poet Alexander Chavchavadze (1786-1846). The house-museum often hosts various exhibitions of prominent Georgian and foreign artists. The house is surrounded by a beautiful park with unique and interesting layout with a mixture of natural and decorated gardens that occupies 18 hectares.

Sighnaghi – City of Love



It is one of the country’s smallest towns with the population of 3000. The town was developed in the 18th century by the king Erekle II as a refuge for the population against Lezgin and Persian attack. City is surrounded by 4km long fence, with 28 towers. The town and its environs are also known for their landscapes and historical monuments. The town has recently undergone a fundamental reconstruction and has become an important part of Georgian Tourism Industry being known as “the City of Love”.

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SVANETI

Ethnographic Museum of Margiani



One of the main sights of Svaneti region is the Ethnographic Museum of Margiani which is located in Mestia in a traditional, ancient Svanetian housing estate. Nowadays the museum is presented as a traditional house and a tower that was often used for protective reasons; otherwise, the local families would use the towers as storage spaces. The house itself is an exact replica of an ancient Svan home and contains traditional Svanetian objects used for everyday life that date back to 17th and 18th century.

Museum of History and Ethnography



Located in north-western Georgia, in the town of the Svaneti region, Mestia. The museum was established in 1936 as a Local Museum. The Museum's collections include important archeological and ethnographic materials, a rich collection of Georgian manuscripts, and Georgian Orthodox icons painted in the unique Svan style. It also houses ancient objects dating back to early empires and cultures that made their mark on Georgian history. The archaeological collection housed in the museum contains many examples of ceramics, jewelry, cult or religious objects, armaments, trading instruments, and numismatic collections. Christian culture collections reserved in Svaneti include many significant Georgian middle century, Syrian, Byzantine, and European artworks.

Ushguli



Ushguli's medieval constructions, just like the towers and churches of Svaneti, are under the protection of UNESCO. A historical settlement located in the very east of Svaneti, Ushguli is one of the highest villages in Europe (2000-2200 meters above sea level). It was part of the so-called "Free Svaneti" as for centuries the people here defended the region against numerous attacks. The church of Saint Mary is located on one of the highest points in Ushguli it is also a home to the remnants of one of the most ancient fortresses of Svaneti with 37 towers, dating back to the reign of Queen Tamar. There is also superb area for hiking and climbing, while horse riding and mountain biking are also available.

ADJARA

Batumi City tour



Batumi is a city which visitors find easy to fall in love with, thanks to its unique blend of subtropical coastline and beaches, framed by spectacular snow-capped mountains and boasting legendary nightlife. The health restoring qualities of this combination of sea and mountain air is renowned and perhaps one reason why Georgia boasts an unusually high number of centenarians. The fields around the city are mostly tea and citrus plantations, sweet fragrance of which defuses throughout the area.

- ✓ Europe Square
- ✓ Astronomical Clock
- ✓ Ali & Nino
- ✓ Piazza Square
- ✓ Neptune Square
- ✓ Old Boulevard
- ✓ Drama Theater
- ✓ Panoramic Wheel
- ✓ St. Nicola's church
- ✓ Alphabet Tower

Batumi Botanical Garden



The Batumi Botanical Garden overlooks the Black Sea and is one the largest and richest botanical gardens in the world. Located 9 km north of Batumi at Mtsvane Kontskhi (Green Cape) it contains thousands of beautiful species of plants.

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