

# CHINA, CENTRAL ASIA “4 STANS” WITH IRAN AND CAUCASUS TOUR – 39 DAYS ITINERARY - 2018

(CHINA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, IRAN, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, ARMENIA)

## **1** APRIL 1 SUNDAY – ARRIVE TO URUMQI (CHINA)

Upon arrival to Urumqi, we'll be transferred to hotel for accommodation and rest after flight. We'll start the tour with welcome dinner at one of the local restaurants. Today we'll overnight in hotel in Urumqi.



Urumqi



## **2** APRIL 2 MONDAY – URUMQI (CHINA)

After breakfast at the hotel we'll start excursion with Xinjian regional museum to see archeological treasures from the Silk Road and Xinjiang's minority cultures. Display of well-preserved 3000 years old mummies excavated from Loulan – a Takla Maka desert. Lunch and dinner at local restaurants, overnight in Urumqi.



Urumqi

## **3** APRIL 3 TUESDAY – URUMQI – TURPAN – 125 MI (CHINA)

Today after breakfast at hotel we'll Transfer to Turpan for a full day sightseeing around Turpan: which will include visiting picturesque Tuyuq ancient village to see the oldest in Turpan area Buddhist caves dated back to the 4th c. Visit local Uygur families enjoy beautiful mountain and grapes sceneries. Have a lunch break. And continue with visiting the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves on the flanks of the Flaming Mountains and Grape Valley. We'll have dinner at local restaurant and overnight at hotel in Turpan.



Turpan

## **4** APRIL 4 WEDNESDAY – TURPAN – URUMQI – 125 MI (CHINA)

After breakfast at hotel we'll start sightseeing with visit the remarkable Karez system, an old engineering miracle designed to bring water to the dry desert town – 2000 years old. Have lunch break and then visit the notable Emin Minaret – 145 ft high, accomplished in 1778 and mosque. We'll end the day with excursion to Jiaohe ancient city – Juaohu ruins. Then we'll return back to Urumqi close to

dinner time, rest and have dinner at one of the local restaurants. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Urumqi.



#### 5 APRIL 5 THURSDAY – URUMQI – KASHGAR – 1 200 MI (CHINA)

Today after breakfast at hotel we'll transfer to airport for morning flight to Kashgar. Upon arrival we'll start sightseeing with visit to colorful unique chaotic Great Sunday bazaar where you will see numerous sections: silk, cotton, knives, hats, pots, pans, fresh vegetables, fruits, carpets and jewelry. After lunch at the local restaurants we'll continue sightseeing with visit the largest mosque in China Idkah mosque built in 1442 year, Apak Khoja's Tomb – the holiest place in Xinjiang for Sufis built in 1640 and Old part of the town. We'll have dinner at the local restaurant and overnight in Kashgar.



#### 6 APRIL 6 FRIDAY – KASHGAR – URUMQI – ALMATY – 2000 MI (CHINA / KAZAKHSTAN)

After breakfast at hotel we'll start the day with excursion to Mor Stupa which is the remain of the big Buddhist temple and then visit Atush village 20 mi away. Then have lunch and soon transfer to the airport for afternoon flight to Urumqi. On arrival we'll take connecting flight to Almaty. Welcome to Kazakhstan! Upon arrival to Almaty airport, we will meet you and transfer to hotel for rest after flight. It takes about 20 min. of driving to the hotel. After we check in to hotel and have a short rest, we will have dinner at one of local restaurants where



we'll provide a short introduction about Kazakhstan – the largest country of Central Asia with majestic mountains and plains, glaciers, and deep rivers, lakes and deserts, boundless steppes and the woods adjoin. Such variety of landscapes causes existence of rich natural world. Besides natural sights the country has a lot of rich history which is imprinted in numerous monuments: the remains of ancient settlements, barrows, petroglyphs, mausoleums and mosques being important shrines of Muslim culture. Kazakhstan – is a country of most ancient civilization of Euroasian continent, homeland of nomad tribes, a significant part of Great Silk Road - 1400 km. The republic contains 27 thousand monuments of antiquity. Leading industries of Kazakhstan are: metallurgy, chemical and mechanical engineering. Oil processing and production of building materials are also developed industries of Kazakhstan. After dinner today we'll overnight at hotel in Almaty.



#### 7 APRIL 7 SATURDAY – ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

After breakfast at hotel, we have a full day of sightseeing ahead. Today we visit: Panfilov Park, Zenkov Wooden Cathedral, St. Nicholas Cathedral, National Musical Instruments Museum, Central State Museum, Almaty's Green Bazaar and have a Panoramic view at observatory.

Alma-Ata is a name of "the southern capital" of Kazakhstan. It is the largest city of country which was state capital during period from 1927 to 1997. Alma-Ata is located in southeast part of Kazakhstan near border with Kyrgyzstan at heights from 670 to 1100 m. The main sight of Alma-Ata are Panfilov Park named in honor of 28 heroes of the panfilovets, stretched in northeast part of the city covering near 18 hectares. Located in center of park is majestic Sacred Voznesensky cathedral. Behind Panfilov park, we come visit to one of biggest market places of Almaty – the Green Bazaar. It is a fine example of a true Asian bazaar. Next we will visit the Museum of national musical instruments named after Ykylas, it was opened in 1980's and contains many types of Kazakh national musical instruments most ancient of which are dated to 17th century. In the southern part of the city we visit Central State Museum – place to see unique archeological finds telling history of Kazakhstan since the most ancient times to present. Museum displays over 120 thousand exhibits. Before dinner excursion to falcon farm with a short show program. After dinner at one of the local restaurants we overnight at hotel in Almaty.



### **8** APRIL 8 SUNDAY – ALMATY – BISHKEK -170 MI (KAZAKHSTAN/KYRGYZSTAN)

Today after breakfast at the hotel we depart Almaty and drive to Bishkek via newly built highway. En route which will take approximately 3 hours we will enjoy beautiful landscape. Soon we will welcome you to Kyrgyzstan. On the way we will provide short information about Kyrgyzstan. Republic located in northeast of Central Asia, crossed by two world great mountain systems, Tien Shan and Pamir. 93% of Kyrgyzstan is covered by mountains, with strong continental climate the country of located 350 meters above sea level. In the afternoon we will arrive to the capital of Kyrgyzstan – Bishkek. Check in to the hotel for a short rest and have lunch at local restaurant. For the second part of the day we will have a sightseeing of Bishkek visit Central Museum, Panfilov park, the local bazaar. After dinner at one of the local restaurants followed by a folk show program, today we will overnight in Bishkek.



### **9** APRIL 9 MONDAY – BISHKEK – ISSYK KUL – 165 MI (KYRGYZSTAN)

After breakfast at hotel we'll transfer to the Issyk Kul Lake, the pearl of Kyrgyzstan. In route we'll visit Burana Tower located in the city of Tokmok in 50 mi from Bishkek. Today we'll have lunch in Kyrgyz family in Tokmon city. After lunch break continue on driving to Issyk Kul Lake through Boom Canyon. Issyk Kul is one of the largest mountain lakes of the world and most beautiful lake in Kyrgyzstan located in northeast part of the republic between ridges of Northern Tien Shan: Kungey Ala and Terskey Ala at the height of 1609 m above sea level. Excursions will also include visiting petroglyphs of Paleolithic era and local museum in Cholpon Ata. Upon arrival we'll check into hotel and have dinner at one of the local restaurants. Overnight at hotel in Issyk Kul Lake.



### **10** APRIL 10 TUESDAY - ISSYK KUL – CHOPON ATA – GRIGOREVKA GORGE – BISHKEK – 163 MI – TASHKENT (KYRGYZSTAN/UZBEKISTAN)



After breakfast at the hotel we'll transfer to Grigorevka Gorge, Grigorevka Gorge located in 45 mi from the city of Cholpon-Ata. Gentle slopes of a valley are covered with a dense fir forest. Length of a valley

is 25 mi. The Grigorevka Gorge, is considered one of the most picturesque in Issyk Kul area. Today we'll have a relaxing day in the nature. After lunch at local restaurant we'll return to Bishkek and transfer to the airport for flight to Tashkent by QH409 at 19:20. Welcome to Uzbekistan! Upon your arrival to Tashkent airport, you'll be met and transferred to hotel to check. In route short introduction about Uzbekistan – one of the economically developed states of the Central Asian region, occupying a bit more than 11% of the territory of Central Asia. Main branches of industry of the republic are linked with the cotton growing, silk production, fruit and vegetable production and irrigation construction. Today we'll have a full day of sightseeing in Tashkent. While for many travelers full day of sightseeing in Tashkent seem as a necessary stopover en route to the dream destinations, this historical city holds many unexpected surprises. Overnight at hotel in Tashkent.



### **11** APRIL 11 WEDNESDAY – TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast first half of the day we'll visit old part of the city: Khast Imam Complex which displays unique Osman Koran thought to be the world's oldest Koran. Chorsu bazaar- is one of the oldest, biggest bazaars of Tashkent. Madrasah Kukeldash – is a significant architectural sight of the 16 century. After lunch we will continue on to modern part of the city: Independent square called Mustakillik, the main square of Tashkent, flanked by largest public buildings and walls of fountains. A. Navoi theatre square built in 1947 by Japanese prisoners in World War 2. Visits to museum of Amir Temur and museum of Handcraft Art will end our excursion of Tashkent, and we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants and overnight at hotel in Tashkent.



### **12** APRIL 12 THURSDAY – TASHKENT – SAMARKAND – 190 MI (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast we will take a train to world famous Samarkand located 190 mi from Tashkent. The road to Samarkand is via Syrdarya and Jizzakh provinces and takes approximately 3 hours. We will arrive to Samarkand in the afternoon, check in to hotel and have lunch. After short rest we'll start our excursion of Samarkand by visiting Paper Mills Factory where we'll have a presentation of paper production from mulberry tree, Afrasiyob Museum, Ulugbek's observatory – dated to 1428 - 1429 – known as biggest observatory of the East with best equipment to the time. After dinner at one of the local restaurants we'll transfer to hotel for overnight in Samarkand.



### **13** APRIL 13 FRIDAY – SAMARKAND (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll have a full day sightseeing of Samarkand. Visit heart of the city – Registan Square which played great role in commercial and scientific life of the time. Gur Emir Mausoleum - mausoleum for the males of Temurid's dynasty, real masterpiece of Central Asian architecture. Shaki Zinda Necropolis in the northern outskirts of Samarkand. Bibi – Khanum Mosque construction of which started in 1399 after Victorian campaign of Temur to India. Central bazaar of Samarkand- Siyobian where we'll taste famous round bread (non) made only in Samarkand. After this long day, we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants and overnight in Samarkand.



14

**APRIL 14 SATURDAY - SAMARKAND - BUKHARA - 172 MI (UZBEKISTAN)**

After breakfast at the hotel, we depart Samarkand for Bukhara. Stop on the way at the ruins of medieval monument Caravanserai Rabat-i-Malik. Continue driving to Bukhara via Gijduvan where we'll visit Abdulla's pottery house where we'll be offered short presentation and a cup of tea. Upon arrival to Bukhara, we'll accommodate at the hotel. Visit Chor Minor memorial. Today we'll dinner in one of the local restaurants and will overnight in Bukhara.



B L D



Bukhara

15

**APRIL 15 SUNDAY - BUKHARA (UZBEKISTAN)**

After breakfast we'll have a full day of sightseeing of this ancient city. Bukhara is one of most historically rich cities on the Great Silk Road attracting attention of thousands of people with its unique heritage. Today we'll visit: Samanid's dynasty mausoleum known to be one of the best architectural samples of the Samanids period (875 - 999). Chashma Ayub Mausoleum - legend say is it of Prophet Jove. Bolo - Khauz Mosque. The Ark Forteress - Citadel is the most ancient memorial of Bukhara, on archeological matter dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Kalon Complex - consists of minaret, Mosque and Madrasah both of which are still active. Magoki Attori Mosque. Ulugbek and Abdulazizi Khan madrasahs. Next we'll visit most popular place of Bukhara - reservoir Lyabi Khauz complex built in 1620 by khans' dignitary Nodir Devan Begi. We'll end the day with a dinner at the local restaurant followed by a show program. Today we'll overnight in Bukhara.



B L D



Bukhara

16

**APRIL 16 MONDAY - BUKHARA (UZBEKISTAN)**

After breakfast we'll continue second full day of sightseeing in Bukhara: former summer palace of Bukhara Emir Said Olimkhan - last Emir of Bukhara, Sitora - iMokhi - Khosa, Museum of Decorative Applied Art. We'll be back to Bukhara in time for dinner and have another overnight in Bukhara.



B L D



Bukhara

17

**APRIL 17 TUESDAY - BUKHARA - KHIVA - 350 MI (UZBEKISTAN)**

After breakfast at the hotel, today we'll have a long day ahead making our way through Kyzyl Kum desert going from Bukhara to Khiva. We'll cover over 350 mi and spend most part of the day on the road. While it is a rather hard day, it is the only way to get from Bukhara to Khiva and we'll try to make it as pleasant as possible. On the way we'll make stops to visit ancient ruins Ayaz Kala and Toprak Kala. We'll have a picnic lunch and upon arrival accommodate in hotel in Khiva for rest and relaxation. Khiva is a fascinating place, walk through Ichan Kala - old walled city of Khiva, will give you an insight into the life led there from ancient days up to the present time. We'll have a dinner at the local restaurant followed by a show program. Overnight is at the hotel in Khiva.



B L D



Khiva

### APRIL 18 WEDNESDAY— KHIVA — URGENCH

After breakfast at hotel today we'll have a full day sightseeing in Khiva: visit Ichan Kala – a UNESCO World Heritage Site including madrasah Muhammad Amin Khan, Kelta Minar, Kunya Ark, madrasah Muhammad Rakhimkhan. We'll have lunch at local restaurant and continue sightseeing program: visit Pakhlavan Mahmud Mausoleum, Islam Khodja Minaret and Madrasah, Djuma Mosque and Minaret, Tash Hovli Palace. After dinner at the local restaurant we'll transfer to hotel for overnight and rest in Khiva.



### APRIL 19 THURSDAY — KHIVA — DASHOGUZ — KUNYA — URGENCH

#### — ASHGABAT — 200 MI (UZBEKISTAN/TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel today in the morning we transfer to border Shavat – Dashoguz –40mi. Upon arrival proceed the way through passport control and customs procedures and enter in Turkmenistan. After border formalities on both sides we'll continue our way to Dashoguz where we'll have lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch we'll drive another 75 mi to Koneurgench – the capital of Khorezmshahs, have sightseeing of Old City which will include: Portal of Caravansaray, Mamun Minaret, Il Arslan Mausoleum, Sultan Tekesh Mausoleum, Academy of Horezm, Kutlug Timur Minaret – one of the tallest minarets in Central Asia and Turabek Hanum Mausoleum. After half day excursion of Koneurgench we'll drive back to Dashoguz where we'll stop for a dinner at one of the local restaurants. After dinner we'll transfer to the airport for a flight from Dashoguz to Ashgabat. Upon arrival we'll accommodate in hotel in Ashgabat for rest and relaxation. We'll have a dinner at the local restaurant. Overnight is at hotel in Ashgabat.



### APRIL 20 FRIDAY — ASHGABAT — MARY — ASHGABAT

#### (TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast we will transfer to the airport of Ashgabat for a flight to Mary. Today we'll visit Old Merv – Merv was located at the road crossing of Great Silk Road and quickly became one of most important and biggest cities of the ancient World. Sightseeing will include: Gyz Gala and Oglan Gala, Complex of Askhabs, Gyaur Gala, Erk Gala, Soltan Gala, Soltan Sanjar Mausoleum, Ibn Zeid Mausoleum. In the evening we'll return to Ashgabat. We'll have dinner at local restaurant. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Ashgabat.



### APRIL 21 SATURDAY — ASHGABAT — NISSA — ASHGABAT

#### (TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast we will proceed with sightseeing: one of the most beautiful cities of the world which was recently included into the Book of Guinness as the Most-White Marble City in the World. Today's sightseeing includes: Complex of Monuments of Oguz Han and Sons surrounded with fountains. Tombs of Turkmenbashi (first President of Turkmenistan S. Nyязow) and his parents and brothers, Old Nissa- The Sanctuary of Parhian Kings, Nissa was the capital of Parthian Empire which lasted 600 years and was greatest enemy of Rome Empire. After excursions of Old Nissa we'll proceed to Monuments of Archabil Shayoly and discover new part of Ashgabat with its' modern buildings, monuments and parks

which includes: Health Path of Turkmenbashi built on mountains which became very popular place among locals, Monument of Constitution and tallest building in Turkmenistan (600 feet), "Alem" Culture and Recreation Center. In the afternoon we'll transfer to hotel and check in. We'll have lunch at one of the local restaurants. After lunch we will continue with sightseeing of Ashgabat, visiting: Museum of Turkmen Carpets, Park dedicated to Turkmen horses-the pride of Turkmen, Gulistan Bazar, Monument for the Victims of the Earthquake of 1948, Monument of Lenin, Ertogrul Gazy Mosque. We'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants. After dinner we'll go for a night tour, driving along the main streets of Ashgabat making stop near Palace of Happiness. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Ashgabat.



**22** APRIL 22 SUNDAY – ASHGABAT – MASHHAD – 170 MI  
(TURKMENISTAN/IRAN)



Today after breakfast we'll have short sightseeing in Ashgabat: National Museum of History highly recommendable: one of the biggest museums in Central Asia. After Museum we'll be visiting Arch of Neutrality – famous rocket and tripod style built building symbolizing neutral status of Turkmenistan. Its' height is over 300 feet including 40 feet rotating statue of first President of Turkmenistan: Saparmyrat Nyyazow (Turkmenbashi). Enjoy short walking tour within the Park of Independency along the hundreds of fountains and statues with stops to visit Monuments of Independency and Ruhnama. After lunch we'll start making our way from Ashgabat to Mashhad. The drive is 170 mi long, which will take us approximately 3 hours, upon arrival to Mashhad we'll catch a flight to Terhan. Once we arrival to Tehran we'll check into hotel and have some time to rest and relax before welcome dinner. Today we'll overnight in Tehran.



**23** APRIL 23 MONDAY – TEHRAN (IRAN)

Today we'll have breakfast at the hotel and a full day sightseeing of Tehran, sightseeing will include: Museum of the Islamic Period, Golestan Palace, Old Bazaar. Before we'll continue sightseeing, we'll have lunch break at local restaurant. Second part of sightseeing will include: Saad Abad Complex, Niavaran Museum and Darake Rural Area. We'll end day with dinner at local restaurant and late city driving tour. Overnight in Tehran.



24

**APRIL 24 TUESDAY – TEHRAN – SHIRAZ (IRAN)**

In the morning we'll transfer to the airport of Tehran for a short flight to Shiraz. Upon arrival we'll check into hotel and have morning excursion to Persepolis, which was capital of Achaemenid Empire, Naghesh-e-Rajab and Naghesh-e-Rostam – UNESCO world heritage sights. We'll have lunch break and continue sightseeing: Eram Garden, (Garden of Paradise) a large garden with a beautiful palace Hafez – 14th Century Persian Mystic poet and Saadi Tombs – famous Persian poet of medieval period. After dinner at local restaurant we'll overnight in Shiraz.



B L D



Shiraz

25

**APRIL 25 WEDNESDAY – SHIRAZ – ISFAHAN – SOOMI (IRAN)**

Today we'll transfer to Isfahan, the drive will take first half of the day, and we'll cover almost 300 mi, it will take approximately 6 hours. In route we'll visit Pasargade a city in ancient Persia and today an archaeological – UNESCO World Heritage site, tomb of Cyrus the Great – founder of Persian Empire. Upon arrival to Isfahan we'll accommodate in hotel and rest. We'll have lunch in route and dinner in a local restaurant of Isfahan. Overnight in Isfahan.



B L D



Isfahan

26

**APRIL 26 THURSDAY – ISFAHAN – TEHRAN (IRAN)**

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll have a full day of sightseeing in Isfahan, visiting: Imam, Sheikh, and Lotfollah Mosques, the Aliqapou Palace, Vanak Church, the Shaking Minarets, and the Fire Temple. After lunch sightseeing of this fascinating city continues with the Friday Mosque, Chehel Sotoun, Hasht Behesht Palace and Khajou Bridge. In the evening we'll take a short flight back to Tehran. Accommodate in hotel, have Farewell dinner and overnight in Tehran.



B L D



Tehran

27

**APRIL 27 FRIDAY – TEHRAN – BAKU (IRAN/AZERBAIJAN)**

After breakfast at the hotel, today we will fly from Tehran to Baku. Depending on flight time, we'll have time to relax before Caucasus part of the tour will start. Welcome to Azerbaijan! Upon your arrival to Baku airport, you'll be met and transferred to hotel to check in and rest. We'll have a welcome dinner at 7PM with short introduction about Azerbaijan – one of the economically developed states of the Caucasus region, located at the shore of Caspian Sea. Main branches of industry of the republic are linked with the oil drilling due to reach deposits of oil and gas in Azerbaijan. Today we'll overnight in Baku hotel.



B L D



Baku

28

**APRIL 28 SATURDAY – BAKU – GOBUSTAN – BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)**

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll spend a day in Azerbaijan having an excursion to Gabustan where we'll see more than 4000 rock-carvings which describe like style of ancient inhabitants of area near Caspian Sea. In the afternoon we'll have lunch and continue our excursion with visit to Museum of Art and have a short (40 min long) cruise of Caspian Sea (if weather permits). In the



evening we'll have a dinner at one of the local restaurants followed with folk show program. We'll overnight in Baku hotel today.



**29** APRIL 29 SUNDAY – BAKU – ABSHERON PENINSULA – BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll spend the morning sightseeing capital of Azerbaijan – city of Baku. Sightseeing will include: panoramic view of the city, visit Shirvan Shahs Palace, Maiden Tower architectural monument of 12<sup>th</sup> century, Caravanserai. After lunch break at one of the local restaurants we'll visit Absheron peninsula – the Fire Worshippers Temple in Surakhany district, historical architectural monument of the 17th. Visit Merdakan Fortresses. Have acquaintance with the Oil Industry in Azerbaijan. Continue on with excursion to “Yanar Dag” – Firing Mountain. We'll have dinner at the local restaurant at the end of the day and overnight at a hotel in Baku.



**30** APRIL 30 MONDAY – BAKU – SHAMAKHA – MARAZA – SHEKI (AZERBAIJAN)

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll spend most of the day in transfer from Baku to Sheki. The transfer will take 4 hours and we'll cover almost 220 mi. In route we'll visit mud volcanoes, Diri Baba mausoleum in Maraza, Yeddi Gumbez and Cuma masque in Shamakha. We'll have lunch break at the restaurant in route. Upon arrival to Sheki, we'll accommodate at the hotel, have some time to rest and then head for dinner. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Sheki.



**31** MAY 1 TUESDAY – SHEKI – GEORGIA BORDER – TELAVI (AZERBAIJAN/GEORGIA)

Today after breakfast at the hotel, we'll have a half day excursion of Sheki and Shebeke visiting Khan's palace and museum of history. After we'll have lunch at the local restaurant we'll be transferred to the border between Azerbaijan and Georgia called Lagodekhi. Once border formalities will be completed, we'll continue sightseeing tour in Georgia, visiting Gremi complex – once the capital of Kakheti province. Visit local family to observe Georgian bread 'Shoti' baking in “Tone” and try local cheese with

freshly baked bread. You'll be offered a cup of simple coffee and we'll move on to Telavi. Upon arrival we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants, accommodate at hotel for rest, overnight is in Telavi.



### **32** MAY 2 WEDNESDAY – TELAVI – SIGHNAGHI – TBILISI (GEORGIA)

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll have a full day sightseeing of Kakheti region well known for its wine producing. Visit Great Caucasus Mountains and valleys of Kakheti, observe traditions and culture of the country, taste wines and delicious food. We visit 11<sup>th</sup> century church of Alaverdi operating as a monastery. Later transfer to Tsinandali Garden and the Museum – estate of 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgian Duke. After excursion we try a glass of wine and continue to a farmer's house to see a unique 300 year-old wine-cellar. We'll get acquainted with the Georgian way of wine-making, quite different from the European and drink more Georgian wine straight from the clay jars. Transfer to the fortified town of love – Signaghi. Here we take a leisure walk and enjoy more wine-tasting at a winery established by an American painter. Afterwards we'll continue making our way to Tbilisi. We'll have lunch and dinner at local restaurants on the way. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Tbilisi.



### **33** MAY 3 THURSDAY – TBILISI – MTSKHETA – GORI – GUDAURI (GEORGIA)

Today after breakfast we'll have an excursion to the ancient capital and religious center of Georgia – Mtskheta dated 3000 years back and see its' historical places: Jvari church built in 6th century and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral built in 11th century – known as the place where the Robe of Christ is buried – a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Later we'll transfer to town of Gori – the heart of Kartli region. We visit Stalin museum and Uplistsikhe Cave Town – dated to 1st millennium BC, it is the place where the Great Silk Road used to pass. Later drive along the Georgian Military Highway and enjoy a photo stop at Ananuri fort set on the background of Jinali water reservoir. We'll have lunch and dinner at local restaurants on the way. Today we'll overnight at hotel in Gudauri.



### **34** MAY 4 FRIDAY – GUDAURI – KAZBEGI – TBILISI (GEORGIA)

Today after breakfast we'll have a stunning drive from Gudauri along the Tergi River which will bring us to Kazbegi – the main town in the region. From Kazbegi a leisurely 2 hour walk up through beautiful valleys and woodland leads to Gergeti Trinity Church located at 7100 ft –round trip will take 3 hr of walking. Weather permitting you may catch a glimpse of one of the highest glaciers in Caucasus – Mt Kazbegi – 16500 ft high. On our way back we enjoy lunch at a local cafe. Walk a bit more back to our vehicle and transfer to Tbilisi. After accommodation and short rest at the hotel we'll head for dinner at a local restaurant followed by a folk show. Overnight at hotel in Tbilisi.



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### MAY 5 SATURDAY – TBILISI – GEORGIA – ARMENIA “SADAKHLO” – SEVAN – DILIJAN (GEORGIA/ARMENIA)

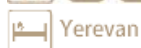
After breakfast at the hotel we'll have a walking sightseeing tour of Tbilisi – capital of Georgia, visiting different religious buildings – churches, synagogue, as well as famous 19th century houses with wooden multi-colored balconies, Old city, Georgian History Museum, Rustaveli Avenue – the main street in Tbilisi. After lunch drive to Georgia – Armenia border “Sadakhlo”. After border formalities we'll start acquaintances with Armenia with the Hagpat dated to 976 AD, Monastic Complex which one of outstanding works of medieval Armenian architecture and is inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage List. The complex used to be an educational center of the middle ages where the majority of Armenian scholars and scientists obtained their education. We'll continue on driving to Dilijan, where we'll accommodate at the hotel, have dinner at local restaurant and overnight in Dilijan.



36

### MAY 6 SUNDAY – SEVAN DILIJAN – NORAVANK – KHOR VIRAP – YEREVAN (ARMENIA)

After breakfast at the hotel we'll start sightseeing tour with Lake Sevan – the emerald of Armenia. It is the second largest alpine freshwater lake in the world and the biggest in Caucasus. This mountain lake is located at 6200 ft above sea level. Sightseeing in Sevan also includes peninsula with Sevan Monastery. Later we'll drive to Selimcaravanserai – built in 1332 by Prince Chesar Orbelian, according to an inscription in Armenian and Arabic, it used to be an important trade point in the famous Silk Road. Visit Noravank monastery – religious and cultural centre of 12th century, Areni wine factory to taste local wine made from special sorts of grapes grows in Armenia and Noravank. We'll have lunch in local cave café. Continue sightseeing with Khor-Virap monastery which is situated in the Ararat valley close the biblical Ararat Mountain, where Noah's arch cast its' anchor. We'll have dinner at a local restaurant followed by folk show program and overnight at hotel in Yerevan.



37

### MAY 7 MONDAY – YEREVAN – GARNI – GEGHARD – YEREVAN (ARMENIA)

After breakfast today we'll drive to a magnificent monument of medieval Armenian architecture – Geghard monastery partly carved out of a mountain. Continue on to Garni Temple – citadel and pagan temple of Garni. Have lunch at a local house in Garni where you will have opportunity to watch Armenian national bread “lavash” baking and barbeque making process in the underground stove called “tonir”. After lunch we'll return to Yerevan. Second part of the day we'll visit the depository of ancient manuscripts – Matenadaran, which contains historical documents of Europe and Asia from many centuries. We'll have dinner and overnight in Yerevan today.



38

### MAY 8 TUESDAY – YEREVAN – ETCHMIATSIN – ZVARTNOTS – YEREVAN (ARMENIA)

After breakfast at the hotel, today we'll drive to Echmiadzin. On the way visiting St Hripsime church. We'll have lunch in a local community tasting homemade dishes. Then drive back to Yerevan with stop at the ruins of Zvartnots temple – of the 7th c. architecture. Second part of the day our main attraction

will be Armenian History Museum and visit to Tsitsernakaberd memorial and museum of victims of Genocide. We'll have farewell dinner at a local restaurant and overnight at a hotel in Yerevan.



39

### MAY 9 WEDNESDAY – DEPARTURE (ARMENIA)

Today is the last day of the tour; we'll have breakfast at the hotel and arrange transfer to the airport for your flight home. End of tour.



**PRICE – \$ 18,125.00 PER PERSON IN DOUBLE**

(Single Supplement – \$ 2,025.00)



**GUARANTEED DEPARTURES IN 2018:**

<b>Start:</b>	<b>End:</b>
March 11	April 18
April 1	May 9
April 22	May 30
May 13	June 20
June 10	July 18
July 29	September 5
August 19	September 26
September 2	October 10
September 16	October 24
September 30	November 7



## HOTELS:

Urumqi ( 3 nights)	Mirage or similar
Turpan (1 night)	Huozhou or similar
Kashgar (1 night)	International or similar
Almaty (2 nights)	Kazzhol or similar
Bishkek (1 night)	Ambassador or similar
Issyk Kul (1 night)	Kapriz or similar
Tashkent (2 nights)	Tashkent Palace or similar
Samarkand (2 nights)	Konstantin or similar
Bukhara(3 nights)	Devon Begi or similar
Khiva (1 night)	Azia Khiva or similar
Ashgabat (3 nights)	Yulduz or similar
Tehran (3 nights)	Parsian Azadi similar
Shiraz (1 night)	Niayesh or similar
Isfahan (1 night)	Abbasi or similar
Baku (3 nights)	Central Park or similar
Sheki (1 night)	Olympic or similar
Telavi (1 night)	Chateau Mere or similar
Tbilisi (2 nights)	Ambasadori or similar
Guduary (1 night)	Guduary or similar
Dilijan (1 nights)	Best Western Paradise or similar
Yerevan (3 night)	Imperial or similar



## PRICE INCLUDES:

Letter Of Invitation
Hotel Accommodation (double room sharing)
Full Board Meals (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*
Bottled water (1 lt per person per day)
All Land Transfers with A/C
Internal Flights
Accompany of guide/escort
Guided sightseeing
Entrance Fees
Show programs

\*Meals: Breakfast at the hotel. Lunch/Dinner consists of: 1 salad, 1 soup, 1 entrée, bread, tea.



## PRICE EXCLUDES:

Tips in hotels, to the guides and drivers
Any extra expenses for additional services in hotels
Video and photo camera charges