

# CHINA, CENTRAL ASIA “4 STANS”, CAUCASUS – 39 DAYS ITINERARY – 2024 (CHINA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, ARMENIA)

## 1 AUGUST – 20 TUESDAY – ARRIVAL 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.



## 2 AUGUST – 21 WEDNESDAY – 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.



## 3 AUGUST – 22 THURSDAY – 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 Tuyoq 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.



#### 4 AUGUST – 23 FRIDAY – 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 – Juaohe 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.



 Urumqi

#### 5 AUGUST – 24 SATURDAY – URUMQI – KASHGAR – 1200 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.



 Kashgar

#### 6 AUGUST – 25 SUNDAY – 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 Eurasian continent, homeland of nomad tribes, a significant part of Great Silk Road – 870 mi. 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 a hotel in Almaty.



### **7** AUGUST – 26 MONDAY – ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

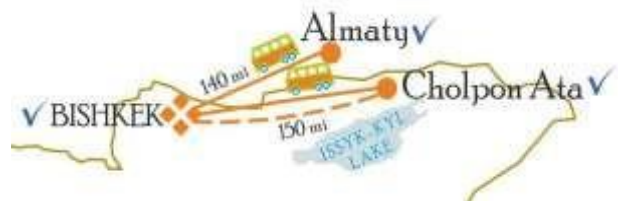
After breakfast at hotel, we have a full day of sightseeing ahead. Today we visit: Panfilov Park, Zenkov Wooden Cathedral, St. Nicholas Cathedral, National Musical Instruments Museum, Central State Museum, Almaty's Green Bazaar and have a Panoramic view at observatory. Almaty is a name of "the southern capital" of Kazakhstan. It is the largest city of country which was state capital during the period 1927 – 1997. Almaty is located in southeast part of Kazakhstan near border with Kyrgyzstan at heights from 670 to 1100 m. The main sight of Almaty is Panfilov Park named in honor of Panfilov's 28 guardsmen, stretched in northeast part of the city covering near 18 hectares. Located in center of park is majestic Holy Ascension 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 in honor of Ykylas Dukenov, People's Composer. It was opened in 1980s 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 archaeological finds telling history of Kazakhstan since the most ancient times to the 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'll overnight at a hotel in Almaty.



### **8** AUGUST – 27 TUESDAY – 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 of the world's major mountain ranges: Tien Shan and Pamir. Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country, with strong continental climate, 93% of its territory is located at over 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** AUGUST – 28 WEDNESDAY – BISHKEK – ISSYK KUL – 165 MI. (KYRGYZSTAN)

After breakfast at hotel we'll transfer to the Issyk Kul Lake, the pearl of Kyrgyzstan. En route we'll visit Burana Tower located in the city of Tokmok, 50 mi. from Bishkek. Today we'll have lunch in Kyrgyz family in Tokmok city. After a lunch break we'll continue on driving to Issyk Kul Lake through Boom Gorge. Issyk Kul is one of the largest mountain lakes in the world and the most beautiful lake in Kyrgyzstan. It is located in the north-east part of the republic between two ridges of the Northern Tien Shan: Kungey Ala-Too and Terskey Ala-Too 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 the hotel and have dinner at one of the local restaurants. Overnight at a hotel in Issyk Kul Lake.



### **10** AUGUST – 29 THURSDAY – ISSYK KUL – CHOPON-ATA – GRIGORIEVKA GORGE – BISHKEK – TASHKENT (KYRGYZSTAN/UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel we'll transfer to Grigorievka Gorge. Grigorievka Gorge is located 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 Grigorievka Gorge is considered to be 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 HY778 at 18:40 (subject to change). Welcome to Uzbekistan! Upon your arrival to Tashkent airport, you'll be met and transferred to hotel to check. En 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. Overnight at a hotel in Tashkent.



### **11** AUGUST – 30 FRIDAY – TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN)

After breakfast at the hotel 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 sights of the 16th century. After lunch we will continue on to modern part of the city: Independence 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 II. Visits to museum of Amir Timur and museum of Handicraft Art will end our excursion of Tashkent, and we'll have dinner at one of the local restaurants and overnight at a hotel in Tashkent.



## **12** AUGUST – 31 SATURDAY – 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 passes through Syrdarya and Jizzakh provinces and takes approximately 3 hours. We will arrive to Samarkand in the afternoon, check in to a 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, Afrasiab 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 a hotel for overnight in Samarkand.



## **13** SEPTEMBER – 1 SUNDAY – 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 a great role in commercial and scientific life of the time. Gur Emir Mausoleum - mausoleum for the males of Timurid dynasty, a 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 Timur to India. Central bazaar of Samarkand – Siab 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** SEPTEMBER – 2 MONDAY – 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 have dinner at one of the local restaurants and will overnight in Bukhara.



### 15 SEPTEMBER – 3 TUESDAY – 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 dynasty mausoleum known to be one of the best architectural samples of the Samanid period (875 - 999). Chashma Ayub Mausoleum – legend says of the Prophet Job. Bolo – Khauz Mosque. The Ark Fortress – Citadel is the most ancient memorial of Bukhara, on archeological matter dated to the 3rd 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 the 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.



### 16 SEPTEMBER – 4 WEDNESDAY – 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 –iMokhli-Khosa, Museum of Decorative Applied Art. We'll back to Bukhara in time for dinner and have another overnight in Bukhara.



### 17 SEPTEMBER – 5 THURSDAY – 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.



### 18 SEPTEMBER – 6 FRIDAY – KHIVA (UZBEKISTAN)

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.



## 19 SEPTEMBER – 7 SATURDAY – KHIVA – DASHOGUZ (UZBEKISTAN/ TURKMENISTAN)

Arrive at Uzbekistan Customs of “Shavat” Border Pass at 08.40 & go through passport control & customs procedures. After you cross the Uzbekistan Customs walk ~150 meters carrying all luggage till Real Wire Border located between Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan. After you crossing the wire border & passport check you will find a shuttle minibus (subject to be availability) which will take you ~1 km distance to Turkmenistan Customs where you will find your Turkmenistan guide waiting for you who will assist you in border passing, visa obtaining (if required) & customs procedures. After border passing formalities drive ~15km & 30min/d/d to Dashoguz to stop for lunch at local restaurant. After lunch break drive ~110km & ~1,5 h/d/d to Koneurgench-the capital of Khorezmshahs (III-XVI cc) inscribed into the monuments list of World Heritage Book, protected by the UNESCO. SS of the old city includes: Portal of Unknown Building (XI-XII), Mamun Minaret (X-IX), Il Arslan Mausoleum (XII), Sultan Tekesh Mausoleum (XIII), Academy of Horezm (III-XIII), Kutlug Timur Minaret (XIV)-one of the tallest minarets in Central Asia, Turabek Hanum Mausoleum (XIV), Mausoleums of Najm Ed Din (XIII) & Soltan Ali (XVI) located near Dash Metjit/Medrese (XIX). After SS of Koneurgench drive back to Dashoguz. Dinner at local restaurant. After dinner transfer to hotel. Accommodation & rest. Overnight in Dashoguz.



## 20 SEPTEMBER – 8 SUNDAY – DASHOGUZ – ASHGABAT (TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast transfer to the airport of Dashoguz for flight to Ashgabat. Flight T5-102. Departure at 08.00 & arrival at 08.50. (flight time & costs are subject to be change due to Turkmenistan Airlines). Upon arrival proceed with Full Day SS of Ashgabat: 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 inc: “Turkmenbashynyn Ruhy Metjidi” which is the biggest in Central Asia & Mausoleum Complex of the tombs of Turkmenbashy (first President of Turkmenistan S. Nyязow) and his parents with his brothers, Old Nissa-The Sanctuary of Parhian Kings (Nissa is situated in 15 km to the west of Ashgabat & founded in the III century B.C. Nissa was the capital of Parthian Empire which lasted for about 600 years and was the biggest competitor for the Rome Empire. Here there were the palace & temple buildings, the depositories & the treasury of the Parthian Kings. During the Old Nissa excavations the monumental constructions are exposed-the temples (round & tower). Taking into consideration the great scientific-cultural meaning, the site of the ancient town is declared the historical-cultural preserve. It was inscribed at the World Heritages Book by the UNESCO). After Old Nissa proceed with SS of Monuments of Archabil Shayoly (Berzengi) to have a close impression of the new part of Ashgabat with its modern buildings, monuments & parks which includes: Health Path of Turkmenbashy built on mountains which became very popular place among locals especially its park is crowded with families who come for

picnic and playing with their children, Memorial Complex with Monuments for the Victims of the Earthquake of 1948, Monuments for Victims of 2nd World War & Patriotic Wars of XIXcc. Transfer to hotel for accommodation (check in after 13.00). Lunch at local restaurant. After lunch break proceed with Half Day SS in/around Ashgabat inc: Museum of Turkmen Carpets (open on Monday-Friday from 09.00 till 16.30 & on Saturdays from 09.00 till 12.00. Closed on Sundays & Public Holidays): it is believed there are only 3 carpet museums in the World & this one is distinguishable among them with its ways of exposition & number of different unique differs. Here is also kept one of the biggest handmade carpets in the world with the Guinness Book Certificate, Monument of Turkmen Horses, Gulistan Bazar (known as "Russian Bazaar" 1950s since it was built as then many Russian used to go there for shopping. Despite it is very rare to see them there its old public name is common to hear), Monument of Lenin which was erected in 1927 and was one those few monuments which survived the earthquake of 1948, Monument "My White City: Ashgabat" & Ertogrul Gazy Mosque – a present from Turkey to Turkmenistan built in 1998 and named after the father of Othman I-the founder Othman Empire in Turkey who is believed left for Turkey from Turkmenistan with his 400 horsemen during Seljuk Turkmen invasions to the west in XII cc. Dinner at local restaurant. O/N in Ashgabat.

Note: Passports required to be left at hotel reception for registration at the City Tourist Board (CTB) in Ashgabat.



## **21** SEPTEMBER — 9 MONDAY — ASHGABAT — MARY (TURKMENISTAN)

Morning transfer the airport of Ashgabat for flight to Mary by Flight: T5-129. Departure at 09.30 & Arrival at 10.10. (flight time & costs are subject to be change due to Turkmenistan Airlines). Upon arrival drive ~35 km & 30min d/d to Bayramaly to have SS of Old Merv known as Mary Shahu Jahan-King of the World for about 300 years became the biggest city in Asia & 8 years Capital of Khalifat, inscribed into the monuments list of World Heritage Book, protected by the UNESCO: Ruins of Gyz Gala & Oglan Gala (VI-VII), Complex of Askhabs (VIII-XIV), Ruins of Gyaur Gala (IV BC), Ruins of Beni Makhan Mosque-first Mosque build in Central Asia (VII), Ruins of Erk Gala (VI BC), Ruins of Soltan Gala (XI), Soltan Sanjar Mausoleum (XII), Ibn Zeid Mausoleum (XII). After Old Merv drive ~35 km & 30min d/d back to Mary. Lunch at local restaurant. After lunch break visit the Local United Museum of History, Ethnography, Flora & Fauna of Mary, Regional Orthodox Church built by Russians at the end of XIX century & walking tour within the central part of Mary City which has the Regional Mosque of Mary Proviencie, the Central Theater of Mary, the Convention & Conference Center "Ruhiet Koshgi", Central Park & Monument of Mollanepes-the National Classic Poet who lived in Mary in XVIII-XIXcc. Evening transfer to the airport of Mary for flight to Ashgabat by Flight T5-132. Departure at 18.10 & Arrival at 19.00. (flight time & costs are subject to be change due to Turkmenistan Airlines). Upon arrival transfer to have dinner at local restaurant. After dinner break night tour/driving along the main avenues/streets of Ashgabat including to stop near Palace of Happiness to have look round its colorful views in night lights which makes it one of the spectacular cities of Central Asia. O/N in Ashgabat.





22

## SEPTEMBER — 10 TUESDAY — ASHGABAT (TURKMENISTAN)

After breakfast you will have another Full Day of Sightseeing in Ashgabat which will include: Memorial Complex with Monuments for the Victims of the Earthquake of 1948, Monuments for Victims of 2nd World War & Patriotic Wars of XIXcc., Complex of Monuments of Oguz Han & Sons surrounded with largest in the world fountain complex which has entered the Guinness Book of World Records as a facility combining the greatest number of fountains in a public place. The complex includes 27 computerized fountains, with the statue of the founder of the Turkmen nation, Oguz Khan, installed on a central podium, Ashgabat's famous "Altyn Asyr" Oriental Bazar- Jygyldyk which is located in ~16km to the north of Ashgabat in its new location/complex built in 2011 (in Russian it is known as Tolkuchka Bazar which was known so in most modern guide books). The Jygyldyk bazaar is open on Thursday (less people), Saturday (more people) & Sunday (many people & best day to visit. Being one of the largest bazaars in Central Asia here it is sold almost everything: food, carpets, camels (Sundays only), big variety of cars, trucks (Sundays only) and etc. Here it is also possible to find plenty of souvenirs such as aladjas, handcrafts, felts, embroideries, jewelers and etc. It is also one of the best places to meet face-to-face with Turkmen culture and people. After Bazar drive to the Equestrian Complex located near the City Hippodrome of Ashgabat to familiarize with the famous Turkmen Horses-Akhalteke which thought to be the rootstock of Arab, Thoroughbred & etc., Ertogrul Gazy Mosque: a present from Turkey to Turkmenistan, built in 1998 and named after the father of Othman I-the founder Othman Empire in Turkey, who is believed left for Turkey from Turkmenistan with his 400 horsemen during Seljuk Turkmen invasions to the west in XII cc. Lunch you will have at one of the local restaurants in Ashgabat. After lunch break visit National Museum of History of Turkmenistan (closed on Tuesdays & Public Holidays): one of the biggest & best exhibited museum in Central Asia. After National Museum proceed with Sightseeing of Monuments of Archabil Shayoly (Berzengi) to have a close impression of the new part of Ashgabat with its modern buildings, monuments & parks which includes: Monument of Constitution opened on 18 May, 2011 & tallest building in Turkmenistan with its 185 meters, "Alem" Culture & Recreation Center: it's the biggest indoor Ferris Wheel included into the Guinness Book, Health Path of Turkmenbashy: built on mountains which became very popular place among locals especially its park is crowded with families who come for picnic and playing with their children, Arch of Neutrality: famous rocket & tripod style built monument symbolizing neutral status of Turkmenistan which was re-build & opened on 12 December, 2011. Its height 95 meters including 12 meters statue of first President of Turkmenistan: Saparmyrat Nyязow (Turkmenbashy) on the top, Monuments of Independency located in the Park of Independency along the hundreds of fountains & statutes. Dinner at one of the local restaurants. After dinner break night tour/driving along the main avenues/streets of Ashgabat including one stop near Palace of Happiness to have look round its colorful views in night lights which makes it one of the spectacular cities of Central Asia. Overnight in Ashgabat.



 Ashgabat

23

## SEPTEMBER — 11 WEDNESDAY — ASHGABAT — BAKU — GOBUSTAN — BAKU (TURKMENISTAN/AZERBAIJAN)



At 01.00 early morning transfer to Ashgabat Airport for flight to Baku by flight LH-613, ASB-GYD 3.30 AM, June 24. Upon your arrival to Baku airport, you'll be met and transferred to hotel to check in and rest. 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 the style of ancient inhabitants of the area near the Caspian Sea. In the afternoon we'll have lunch and continue our excursion with a visit to the Museum of Art and have a short (40 min long) cruise of the Caspian Sea (if weather permits). In the evening we'll have a dinner at one of the local restaurants followed by a folk show program. We'll overnight in a Baku hotel today.



## **24** SEPTEMBER – 12 THURSDAY – BAKU – ABSHERON PENINSULA – BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

After breakfast at the hotel today we'll spend the morning sightseeing the capital of Azerbaijan – the city of Baku. Sightseeing will include: panoramic view of the city, visit Shirvan Shahs Palace, Maiden Tower architectural monument of the 12th century, Caravanserai. After lunch break at one of the local restaurants we'll visit the Absheron peninsula – the Fire Worshippers Temple in Surakhany district, historical architectural monument of the 17th. Visit Merdakan Fortresses. Have an acquaintance with the Oil Industry in Azerbaijan. Continue on with an 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.



## **25** SEPTEMBER – 13 FRIDAY – 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, YeddiGumbez and Cuma mosque 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 a hotel in Sheki.



## **26** SEPTEMBER – 14 SATURDAY – SHEKI – GEORGIA BORDER – SIGHNAGHI – TBILISI (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. We'll get acquainted with the Georgian way of wine-making, quite different from the European and taste Georgian wines in the fortified town of love – Signaghi. Here we take a leisure walk and enjoy the great views of the mighty Great Caucasus. Transfer to Tbilisi. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.



## **27** SEPTEMBER – 15 SUNDAY – TBILISI (GEORGIA)

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 (closed on Mondays), Rustaveli Avenue – the main street in Tbilisi. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.



## **28** SEPTEMBER – 16 MONDAY – TBILISI – MTSKHETA – KAZBEGI (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 drive along the Georgian Military Highway and enjoy a photo stop at Ananuri fort set on the background of Jinvali water reservoir. Arrive in Kazbegi and take a 4WD tour to Gergeti church. Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Kazbegi.



## **29** SEPTEMBER – 17 TUESDAY – KAZBEGI – GORI – KUTAISI (GEORGIA)

Transfer to Gori - the town where Georgia's infamous son J. Stalin was born. We visit the original house where he was born and see his museum. Arrive in Kutaisi and take a short tour in the city center, visit the agricultural market and Bagrati Cathedral. Dinner at a local restaurant or family. Overnight at a hotel in Kutaisi.



## **30** SEPTEMBER – 18 WEDNESDAY – KUTAISI – GELATI – MESTIA (GEORGIA)

In the morning visit UNESCO World Heritage Site of Gelati with beautiful murals and alter mosaic. Today's drive is magnificent since we drive along the road which is surrounded by coniferous forest, gushing mountain rivers (Enguri and Chubrula which meet each other at a certain point – we're going to have a photo stop there), wonderful scenery, snow-capped mountain ranges and of course small Svanetian villages. We can have some stops a long the way to take pictures, walk a bit along the road or just enjoy simple coffee at road side local cafes (at own expense). Dinner and overnight at a family hotel in Mestia.



### 31 SEPTEMBER – 19 THURSDAY – MESTIA – USHGULI – MESTIA (GEORGIA)

Today we drive to the most beautiful and the highest permanently populated village in Europe “Ushguli”. On our way we pass beautiful Svanetian villages where we can have short stops and take pictures or take some short walks through the villages and try to get a closer view on how locals live. We’ll also stop at a river side tower called Maiden Tower. When we arrive in Ushguli we take a short walk in the alleys of the village and towards the highest point of Georgia Mt. Shkhara (5068m). We can’t leave Ushguli without having lunch at a local family. Return to Mestia in the late afternoon. Overnight at a hotel in Mestia.



### 32 SEPTEMBER – 20 FRIDAY – MESTIA – ZUGDIDI – TSKALTUBO – KUTAISI (GEORGIA)

Visit Dadiani Palace (closed on Mondays) in Zugdidi and continue to magnificent underground grotto of stalactites and stalagmites (closed on Mondays). Arrive in Kutaisi and enjoy free time. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at a hotel in Kutaisi.



### 33 SEPTEMBER – 21 SATURDAY – KUTAISI – CHIATURA – UPLISTSIKHE – TBILISI (GEORGIA)

Today we’ll take another road to Tbilisi which will take us through the Soviet looking town Chiatura famous for its manganese mines. We’ll have a stop at a local winery to try the wines of Western Georgia and enjoy lunch. Delve deep to Georgia’s ancient history by visiting the cave city Uplistsikhe which used to host the old caravans transporting goods from Asia to Europe as it was on the Great Silk Road route. Transfer to Tbilisi. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.



### 34 SEPTEMBER – 22 SUNDAY – TBILISI (GEORGIA)

Morning walking tour in 19th century Tbilisi for having a look at Art Nuevo of Tbilisi. Then visit Dry Bridge Art and Flea Market. Afternoon time at leisure. Dinner at a local restaurant or house. Overnight at a hotel in Tbilisi.



**35****SEPTEMBER – 23 MONDAY – TBILISI – GEORGIA – ARMENIA  
“SADAKHLO” – SEVAN – DILIJAN (GEORGIA/ARMENIA)**

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****SEPTEMBER – 24 TUESDAY – 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 Selim caravanserai– 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****SEPTEMBER – 25 WEDNESDAY – 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

**SEPTEMBER – 26 THURSDAY – YEREVAN – ETCHMIATZIN – ZVARTNOTS – YEREVAN (ARMENIA)**

After breakfast at the hotel, today we'll drive to Etchmiatzin. 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

**SEPTEMBER – 27 FRIDAY – 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. Thank you!



**PRICE – \$ 21,500.00 PER PERSON IN DOUBLE (SINGLE SUPPLEMENT – \$ 2,025.00)**



**GUARANTEED DEPARTURES IN 2024:**

Start:	End:
March - 26	May - 3
April - 16	May - 24
April - 30	June - 7
May - 14	June - 21
May - 28	July - 5
August - 20	September - 27
September - 3	October - 11
September - 17	October - 25
October - 1	November - 8
October - 15	November - 22



**HOTELS:**

Urumqi (3 nights)	Mirage or similar
Turpan (1 night)	Huozhou or similar
Kashgar (1 night)	International or similar

Almaty (2 nights)	Kazzhol Park or similar
Bishkek (1 night)	Ramada or similar
Issyk Kul (1 night)	Kapriz or similar
Tashkent (2 nights)	Tashkent Palace or similar
Samarkand (2 nights)	Diyora or similar
Bukhara (3 nights)	Sasha & Son or similar
Khiva (2 nights)	Asia Khiva or similar
Dashoguz (1 night)	Dashoguz or similar
Ashgabat (3 nights)	Yulduz or similar
Baku (2 nights)	Midtown or similar
Sheki (1 night)	Macara or similar
Tbilisi (4 nights)	Tiflis Palace or similar
Kazbegi (1 night)	4* Rooms Kazbegi (glacier view rooms)
Kutaisi (2 nights)	Best Western or similar
Mestia (2 nights)	Family hotel Bapsha or similar
Dilijan (1 night)	Dilijan Paradise or similar
Yerevan (3 nights)	Opera Suites 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 (Urumqi-Kashgar, Kashgar-Urumqi-Almaty, Bishkek-Tashkent, Dashoguz-Ashgabat, Ashgabat-Mary, Mashhad-Tehran, Tehran-Shiraz, Isfahan-Tehran, Tehran-Baku);
- ✓ Railway ticket (Tashkent-Samarkand);
- ✓ 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.