



world.  
JOURNEYS

# CROSSROADS OF THE CAUCASUS

2025



# CROSSROADS OF THE CAUCASUS

*Discover the exotic history and culture of the Caucasus with our hosted journey through Istanbul, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Explore the ancient birthplace of viticulture and wine-making in Kakheti, visit farmers markets, sacred monasteries, artisan workshops and enjoy a cooking class and wine tasting. See the mighty Caucasus Mountains and view Mt Ararat from the city of Artaxata. Above all, experience the warmth and hospitality of the generous peoples of the region – an experience not to be missed.*

## 18 DAYS • HOSTED JOURNEY

**COUNTRIES** Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia

**DEPARTS** 5 May 2025

## YOUR JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

- Explore the bustling city of Istanbul with its iconic landmarks and exotic Grand Bazaar
- Fly to Azerbaijan to visit the Old City of Baku, and Gobustan National Park
- Enjoy wine-tasting in Georgia, birthplace of viticulture, visiting the country's many fascinating cultural highlights, along with stunning mountain scenery
- Armenia offers ancient monasteries, beautiful Lake Sevan, poignant history and stunning views of Mt Ararat

## SPECIAL EXPERIENCES

### *Take a walking tour of Istanbul*

Visit the architectural wonders of Topkapi Palace and the Hagia Sophia, and marvel at the Grand Bazaar.

### *Visit the 6th century Jvari Monastery*

Hear the extraordinary story of St Nino at Svetitskhovetli.

### *Join artisan workshops*

Learn traditional techniques in stained glass, woodwork, food preparation and jewellery.

### *Spend time at a Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) school*

See how this modern centre offers free education to rural communities, and stay at the Concept Hotel, operated as a social enterprise.



The Blue Mosque and the Hagia Sophia, Istanbul



# CROSSROADS OF THE CAUCASUS

ⓑ BREAKFAST   Ⓛ LUNCH   ⓓ DINNER

– MAY 2025

**MON 5: ISTANBUL** ⓑ

Arrive in Istanbul and transfer to your hotel.

**TUE 6: ISTANBUL** ⓑ ⓓ

Your walking tour this morning includes Topkapi Palace Museum, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and the famous Grand Bazaar.

**WED 7: ISTANBUL** ⓑ ⓓ

Continue exploring Istanbul this morning with the Basilica Cistern and Spice Market. Join a cruise on the Bosphorus before relaxing this afternoon.

**THU 8: ISTANBUL > BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)** ⓑ

Transfer to the airport and fly to Baku. On arrival transfer to your hotel and this evening is at leisure.

**FRI 9: BAKU** ⓑ

Explore fascinating Baku today starting at Martyrs Lane for a panoramic view of the city. Then head into the Old City to see the Shirvanshah Palace, Maiden Tower, Fountain Square and Green Bazaar.



The Palace of the Shirvanshahs in the Inner City of Baku

**SAT 10: BAKU > GOBUSTAN > BAKU** ⓑ

Head into the historical and cultural reserve of Gobustan this morning and visit the Gobustan Petroglyphs Museum. Afternoon at leisure.

**SUN 11: BAKU > SHAMAKHI > SHEKI** ⓑ

Head west for Sheki this morning, stopping en route to see the Juma Mosque in Shamakhi. On arrival in Sheki, visit the Sheki Khans Palace and Upper Caravanserai, an 18th century remnant of the city's merchant history. Join a Shebeke workshop in stained glass windows.

**MON 12: SHEKI > LAGODEKHI > TELAVI (GEORGIA)** ⓑ Ⓛ

Transfer to the border to meet your Georgian guide. Explore the most fertile part of Georgia - Kakheti, which borders the Great Caucasus range. This region is known as a birthplace of viticulture and wine-making. Have lunch with a wine-making family.

**TUE 13: TELAVI > SIGHNAGHI > TBILISI** ⓑ Ⓛ ⓓ

Visit the local farmers market in Telavi before heading to the fortified town of Signaghi, famous for its wine and carpet

making culture. Enjoy breathtaking views of the Kizikhi area and the unusual charm of Signaghi Royal Town. Walk the narrow streets with buildings characterised by their intricately carved wooden balconies. Lunch is a culinary masterclass and wine tasting before continuing to Tbilisi.



Dried fruits, Tbilisi Market

**WED 14: TBILISI** ⓑ Ⓛ

Visit Metechi Church, Sioni Cathedral and Anchiskhati Basilica, the oldest surviving church in Tbilisi, before heading to Narikhala Fortress for wonderful views across the city. Visit the National Museum of Georgia before a stroll along Rustaveli Avenue.

**THU 15: TBILISI > MTSKHETA > TSEROVANI > BORJOMI** ⓑ Ⓛ

Drive to Mtskheta - the ancient capital of Georgia. Visit the UNESCO sites of Jvari, where St. Nino, a female evangelist, erected a cross on the site of a pagan temple and Svetitskhoveli, the fortified cathedral where the Robe of Christ is said to be buried. Meet a member of the community of IDP (Internally Displaced People) from the Russian occupied South Ossetia Region before joining an enamel workshop.

**FRI 16: BORJOMI > VARDZIA > BORJOMI** ⓑ Ⓛ

Drive to the cave town of Vardzia, via the Khertvisi Fortress. Visit newly renovated Rabat Castle which is often called a symbol of tolerance and the Akhaltsikhe Synagogue of the Georgian Jews before returning to Borjomi for overnight.

**SAT 17: BORJOMI > GORI > ANANURI > GUDAURI** ⓑ Ⓛ ⓓ

After breakfast drive to Gori, known as the birthplace of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. Visit Stalin's Museum in Gori where you can see the house where Stalin was born, and his personal railway carriage. Continue to the 16th – 17th century fortress and church of Ananuri. Overnight in Gudauri.

**SUN 18: GUDAURI > KAZBEGI > GUDAURI** ⓑ Ⓛ

See the high peaks, roaring rivers and mountain lifestyle of Georgia's northern borderlands by travelling via one of the oldest roads in Georgia, which the Russian Tsar Alexander I named the Georgian Military Highway. Weather permitting we will visit 'Mkinvartsveri' or Mt Kazbek, the dormant volcano soaring to 5047 m. Join a jeep tour to Gergety Trinity Church – the most important altar of 14th century, located

on the slope of Mount Kazbek. Enjoy a home-hosted lunch and dumpling making class in the tiny, remote village of Tsdo. After lunch meet a wool felt master and learn about this centuries-old craft tradition.

**MON 19: GUDAURI > SADAKHLO > HAGHPAT MONASTERY (ARMENIA)** <sup>ⓑ</sup> <sup>Ⓛ</sup> <sup>Ⓧ</sup>

Drive to the Sadakhlo border crossing, stopping en route in Tblisi for lunch. Cross into Armenia this afternoon and visit Haghpats monastery, famous for its unique school of manuscripts. Visit the COAF Smart School, a modern centre offering free education to rural children, and enjoy a stay at the Concept Hotel here.

**TUE 20: HAGHPAT > DILIJAN > LAKE SEVAN > YEREVAN** <sup>ⓑ</sup> <sup>Ⓛ</sup>

Visit artisan workshops in Dilijan then head for the monastery of Sevanavank at Lake Sevan. The panoramic views are a just reward for the steep climb of 200 steps. Culinary workshop and lunch before continuing to Yerevan. After a rest join a walking tour of downtown Yerevan.

**WED 21: GEGHARD CAVE MONASTERY > GARNI PAGAN TEMPLE** <sup>ⓑ</sup> <sup>Ⓛ</sup> <sup>Ⓧ</sup>

Drive from Yerevan to the UNESCO World Heritage site cave monastery of Geghard with a live performance of medieval Armenian spiritual chants in one of the cave chambers of the monastery. Then drive to Garni to visit its pagan temple dating from the 1st century. This Greco-Roman temple was dedicated to the deity of the sun and justice, Mithra. After lunch witness

one of the most impressive natural monuments of Armenia, “Symphony of Stones”, located in the Garni Gorge. Overnight in Yerevan.



The ancient Armenian church Khor Virap

**THU 22: YEREVAN** <sup>ⓑ</sup> <sup>Ⓛ</sup> <sup>Ⓧ</sup>

Drive to Khor Virap monastery for views of Mt Ararat. Back in Yerevan visit the Armenian Genocide Museum & Memorial before meeting a musician for a presentation of traditional Armenian woodwind musical instruments followed by a live performance on various instruments. Enjoy a farewell dinner this evening.

**FRI 23: YEREVAN** <sup>ⓑ</sup>

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel this morning before a transfer to the airport.

**Departs 5 May 2025**

Tour cost including flights

**Twin** *per person*

\$16,595

**Single** *per person*

\$20,513

**INCLUDED**

- Small group tour (18 max)
- A World Journeys host
- Accommodation in 4-star hotels (or best available)
- Transfers, sightseeing and entrance fees as per the itinerary
- Transport by air and road as per itinerary
- Meals as indicated <sup>ⓑ</sup> <sup>Ⓛ</sup> <sup>Ⓧ</sup>
- Gratuities

**NOT INCLUDED**

- Items of a personal nature
- Visas
- Travel insurance (mandatory)
- Flights from/to Australia

**GRATUITIES**

In the countries we are visiting, tipping is customary. For a hassle-free journey, tipping is included and will be handled by the World Journeys host.

**BOOKING CONDITIONS**

A non-refundable deposit of \$3,000 per person is required, with the balance due 4 February 2025. As cancellation fees apply, travel insurance is mandatory. Please refer to World Journeys’ terms and conditions and our Health & Medical Requirements at [www.worldjourneys.com.au/terms/](http://www.worldjourneys.com.au/terms/)

**PLEASE NOTE**

Travel by road can involve long journeys on uneven roads with only limited opportunities for comfort breaks. Porters are unavailable at some hotels and during border crossings. A base level of fitness is required for this tour - you should be able to comfortably walk up to 4 kms unaided. The order of sightseeing may vary in accordance with local conditions.

**WELCOME BACK**

If you have travelled on one of our Hosted Journeys before, we would like to welcome you back with a saving of \$400 per couple or \$200 for a single traveller.

**PLEASE CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL**