



PEREGRINE
SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

Discover Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia

Peregrine Travel Centre WA
Escorted by Mike Wood
AUD\$6,995 twin share



Our Travel Style

One thing we've learned at Peregrine – you never outgrow adventure. The spirit that drives you to get out there and see the world. Not through a coach window or with 50 strangers wearing headsets, not with a personal butler or a big buffet breakfast – but intimately, authentically and memorable.

At Peregrine, we're about premium adventures, and for us that means embracing the spirit of adventure through a more immersive cultural journey, hand-picked accommodation, small groups, award-winning local guides, added inclusions and a more considered pace. Premium means an exceptional experience, but never an artificial one.

Yes, adventure still exists. It's still out there. It just got a whole lot easier to find.

Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia 22 nights AUD\$6,995 twin share

Start Mon 11th May 2020 in Baku; finish 2nd June 2020 in Yerevan

Single Supplement available at AUD\$1,690 per person.

(Historical culture, spectacular scenery, friendly locals and great walking combined)

About Your Trip

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Start Location

Baku, Azerbaijan

Finish Location

Yerevan, Armenia

Accommodation

Hotel
Guesthouses

Rooming Requirements

Twin Share

Included Meals

Breakfast (21)
Lunch (8)
Dinner (8)

Leader/Guide

English Speaking Leader throughout
Local walking guides

Included Activities

Per Daily itinerary

Entrance/Admission Fees

Where applicable with
included activities

Airport Transfers

Arrival and Departure Transfers are
Included on a Group Basis

Transport

Private bus as per itinerary

Exclusions

- International Flights
- Any visas required
- Services not mentioned in the itinerary
- Late check out at hotels
- Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks with included lunches and dinners
- Tips for leaders, guide and driver
- Expenditure of personal nature
- Personal Insurance
- Optional activities

Local Leaders

All Peregrine trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Peregrine endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders. Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects.



This trip will be fully escorted by Peregrine Travel Centre WA owner, Mike Wood, who visited all three countries in 2015, Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia. Mike's background is in trekking and walking trips and he was surprised at the quality and extent of the walking possibilities in the region, and the fact that they were not being utilised in normal group itineraries. Mike has researched this itinerary in conjunction with the local expert operators that we use in the region. This trip is unique and has been designed to mix the cultural aspects of the region with time spent walking in the natural environment. This will be Mike's 40th year of escorting groups all around the world in places like the Himalaya, Antarctica, Patagonia and Europe and he is very excited about this trip.

Discover, Georgia & Armenia Itinerary

Day 1/Mon 11 May 20

Airport(Baku)-Baku

Meals: Dinner

Salam eleykim! Welcome to Azerbaijan. On arrival at Baku Airport, you'll be met by a representative and transferred to your hotel. The adventure begins with a welcome meeting this evening, followed by a group dinner. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask reception where it will take place. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). If you're going to be late, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please ensure you have all these details to provide to your leader.

Accommodation: Boutique 19 or similar

Day 2/Tue 12 May

Baku-Absheron-Baku

Meals: Breakfast

In the morning we start Baku city tour: panorama view of Baku; Visit old City: Shemakha gate, Shirvanshakhs' Palace, Maiden Tower, caravanserai, old market square, Carpet museum.

Afterwards we will do a tour to the Absheron Peninsula. We will visit the ancient Zoroastrian Ateshgah fire temple, the Mardakan medieval fortress, the Yanardagh fire mountain and then return to Baku.

Accommodation: Boutique 19 or similar

Day 3/Wed 13 May

Baku-Gobustan-Baku

Meals: Breakfast

Drive to Gobustan. Visit the ancient Gobustan rock paintings museum in the open air (UNESCO) & onsite archaeological museum. En-route we will have a photo-stop for a gathering of old oil rigs moored against each other in the port.

Accommodation: Boutique 19 or similar

Day 4/Thu 14 May

Baku-Sheki

Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast at a hotel. Leaving Baku, depart for the Caucasus Mountains in the northwest of Azerbaijan. The dry landscape gives way to a densely forested mountain area. En-route we will visit an active mud volcanoes site by the main highway, plus the Diri Baba shrine in Maraza, also the Yeddi Gumbez tomb and Juma mosque in Shemakha. We will watch a Yoghurt making process in the local house with snacks.

Arrive in Sheki, visit local craft workshop where famous "Shebeke" handmade vintages are produced and well-known Sheki Khans Palace with its magnificent frescoes and stained glass.

Accommodation: Sheki Palace / Sheki Saray or similar.





Day 5/Fri 15 May

Sheki-Lagodekhi(border)-Gremi-Kvareli

Meals: Breakfast , Lunch & Dinner

Breakfast at a hotel. Visit traditional bazaar and drive to Azerbaijan-Georgia border (Lagodekhi). Here we will change our local leader and transportation. There will be a local leader provide in each of the three countries as per regulations. We then continue to the Kakheti region famous for being a wine making area, as well as associated with welcoming hospitality. Here we can see both the snowy Caucasus Mountains and many fertile valleys.

First, we visit the Gremi Architectural Complex (16th century) with its museum (closed on Mondays). Then we will have a lunch at a local family with delicious homemade Georgian cuisine and wine. We continue to the wine factory, where you will try different kinds of famous Georgian wines. Afterwards we drive to our hotel and relax.

Dinner and overnight at a hotel in Kvareli.

Accommodation: Royal Batoni or similar

Day 6/Sat 16 May

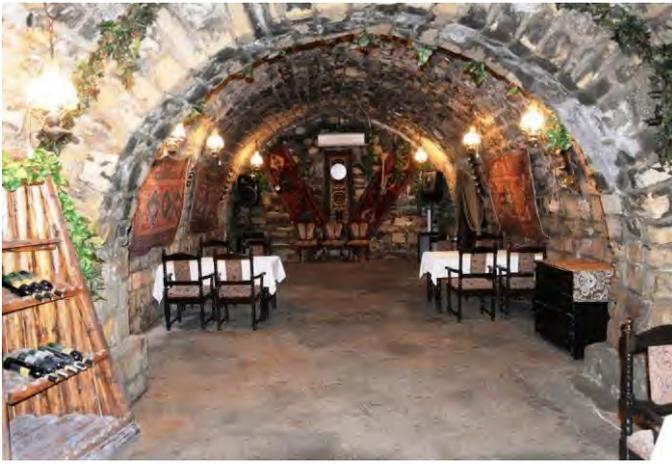
Kvareli-Sighnaghi-Tbilisi

Meals: Breakfast

After breakfast, we drive to visit the beautiful 18th century, small town of Sighnaghi that will impress you with its old wall and small houses with tile roofs and decorated balconies. From here, we can see the picturesque views of Alazani valley and Great Caucasus Mountains.

Then we depart for Tbilisi and explore the capital of Georgia. Wander in the old districts of the city that are structured like terraces, as well as take a walk in the narrow streets to enjoy the colourful houses, patterned balconies and wonderful samples of modern architecture. We will start the tour from Metekhi church (13th century) facing the magnificent views over old Tbilisi. A stroll along winding little streets takes us to the main sights of the city. Afterwards we'll have some free time.

Accommodation: Mecure Old Town Tbilisi or similar



Day 7/Sun 17 May

Tbilisi

Meals: Breakfast

In the morning, we will enjoy the panoramic views of the whole town and wander through the ancient Narikala fortress (4th century), to find ourselves in the historical domed sulphur bath area- connected with the name of the city.

We visit the stunning treasury of the Golden Fund of the historical museum (closed on Mondays), which will prove the fact that Georgia is truly the land of the Golden Fleece. Then we continue to the local art studio, where you will be acquainted to Georgian cloisonne enamel "Minanqari" technique and see how it is made. Afterwards we will have some free time.

Accommodation: Mecure Old Town Tbilisi or similar

Day 8/Mon 18 May

Tbilisi-Mtskheta-Chardakhi-Gelati-Kutaisi

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch

Today we visit the ancient capital and religious centre of Georgia – Mtskheta and see its historical places: Jvari Monastery (6th century) and impressive Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (11th century) where the Robe of Christ is buried. Both Jvari and Svetitskhoveli are UNESCO World Heritage sites. We visit “Iago’s wine cellar” in the village of Chardakhi where we taste unique BIO wines produced by traditional Georgian method in Kvevri. (This method is inscribed in the UNESCO intangible heritage list). It is noteworthy that you can find this wine in the list of unique wines of hotel Ritz in London.

Continue to Uplistsikhe Cave Town (1st millennium BC) where the Great Silk Road used to pass. Here you will see dwelling quarters, wine cellars, bakeries, a three nave basilica church hewn out into the rock.

Drive to Kutaisi – second largest city in the country. Visit Gelati monastery and academy - UNESCO site from the 12th century.

Accommodation: Best Western or similar





Day 9/Tue 19 May

Kutaisi-Zugdidi-Becho

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Today we drive to Mountain region of Svaneti. Arrive in the small village of Becho for our overnight stay. On the way, we will stop in Zugdidi for lunch. Visit Local duke's Palace in Zugdidi.

Dinner and overnight at a family hotel in Becho.

Accommodation: Family Hotel or similar

Day 10/Wed 20 May

Becho-Ushba waterfall-Mestia

Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch & Dinner

Today we have some amazing adventures in store. First, we will drive to Shikhra village. From there we will set out on foot to the waterfalls of Ushba. A muddy forest trail follows a noisy river, whose mouth is at Ushba glacier. Not too long after this waterfall comes into view, we see several cascades of water flowing down side by side on the mountain slope creating an unforgettable panorama. We could go to the base of the large waterfall or head up to the top and gaze down from above at the picturesque Dolra River Valley. Upon returning home, pleasantly tired, we will be treated to the most delectable Svanetian dinner when we overnight at a family hotel in Mestia.

Military Base ↑↓ 270m (walking time 2-3 hours) 1st waterfall ↑↓ 450m (walking time 3-4 hours)
Top of the waterfall ↑↓ 980 (walking time 5-6 hours)

Accommodation: Family Hotel or similar

Day 11/Thu 21 May

Mestia-Mulakhi-Mestia

Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch & Dinner

After breakfast we will see how Georgians make cheese at the local family farm. Then we will drive to the village of Lakhiri and start our walk towards Mestia. After an uphill (1870m) we descend to the beautiful valley full with flowers and have a view of Chalaadi glacier (2300 m.) and Mestia valley with its watchtowers. After returning in Mestia we visit Historical – Ethnographic

museum (closed on Mondays). Then we continue to the local family where we will participate in the traditional meal “Kubdari” (meat bread) preparing process. Dinner and overnight at a family hotel in Mestia.

↑320m↓500m (walking time 4-5 hours)

Accommodation: Family Hotel or similar



Day 12/Fri 22 May

Mestia-Ushguli

Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch & Dinner

Today we visit the village of Ushguli, which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The village is located at 2200m and is the highest continuously inhabited village in Europe. The village is most famous for its abundance of watchtowers and this is where you get the view of the highest mountain in Georgia – Mt. Shkhara (5068m). We will visit Lamaria church (12th century) and walk to Queen Tamar’s tower (2300m). In the evening, we can walk around the village and get familiar with the daily life of the local people.

Overnight at a guesthouse in Ushguli (Might be shared facilities).

↑↓250m (walking time 2-3 hours)

Accommodation: Guesthouse



Day 13/Sat 23 May

Ushguli-Shkhara glacier-Mestia

Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch & Dinner

We start our walk from the guesthouse. The route takes us to the base of Georgia's highest mountain, Shkhara (5068 m) and rich tongue of the glacier. This is the place where the main river of Svaneti – Enguri, takes its source. After reaching the glacier (2500m) we return to Ushguli. During our walking, we have opportunity to enjoy beautiful meadows rich of alpine flowers. Return to Mestia.

Dinner and overnight at a Family Hotel in Mestia.

↑↓320m (walking time: 5 hours)

Accommodation: Family Hotel or similar



Day 14/Sun 24 May

Mestia-Koruldi Lakes-Mestia

Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch & Dinner

An amazing day is ahead of us. We will go from Mestia to Koruldi lakes, which are situated at the foot of a mountain with a double summit, Ushba (4,700 m.) On the way, we will see countless summits and glaciers and the gigantic mountains arising out of each other: Tetnaldi (4,800 m.), Laila (4,008 m.), Chatini (4,012 m.), Banguriani (3,838 m.), and Mestia will come clearly into view. At the small mountain lakes, after making the journey up, we will be overwhelmed by the impressive 360-degree panorama of the Greater Caucasus. We will return to Mestia along the very same path.

(Walking time: 7/8 hours)

Accommodation: Family Hotel or similar

Day 15/Mon 25 May

Mestia-Batumi

Meals: Breakfast

Today we travel to the Black Sea coast. After some hours of driving we will have chance to walk around the town of Batumi and have free time.

Accommodation: Radisson Batumi or similar

Day 16/Tue 26 May

Batumi

Meals: Breakfast

Batumi - Georgia's summer holiday capital. The city has sprouted new hotels and attractions like mushrooms in recent years, but it still has much of its charm.

Strolling along Batum Boulevard, with its trees, paths, fountains, cafes, beach bars and some quirky attractions, this is the life and soul of Batumi.

On the Boulevard you'll find a large Ferris wheel, the Alphabet Tower, a monument to Georgian script and culture, moving metal sculpture of Ali & Nino - the protagonists of Kurban Said's marvellous novel of that name, an ornamental lake hosts the Dancing Fountains, an entertaining laser, music and water show.

During the city tour we'll visit Europe square with Astronomical clock and Medea statue. Visit Piazza Square, one of the most beautiful squares in whole Georgia. Distinguished by its painting, as well as by its exquisite mosaics and stained glass windows. Piazza Square has already become the venue of numerous entertaining and cultural events.

Accommodation: Radisson Batumi or similar



Day 17/Wed 27 May

Batumi-Prometheus Grotto-Tbilisi

Meals: Breakfast

Drive to Tskaltubo. Visit Prometheus grotto (closed on Mondays) with stalactites and stalagmites. Afterwards drive to Tbilisi

Accommodation: Mercure Old Town Tbilisi or similar

Day 18/Thu 28 May

Tbilisi-Sadakhlo(border)-Haghpat-Dilijan

Meals: Breakfast

Meeting at Armenia Georgia Sadakhlo border. Drive to visit Haghpat monastery, which is listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO. The architectural complex of Haghpat is among the outstanding works of medieval Armenian architecture. Haghpat was also a major literary centre in the middle ages. Start hiking from Haghpat monastery. This is a delightful hike showing the beauty and scenery of Lori region. The trail ends by visiting Kayanberd fortress. Arrival Dilijan resort town often referred to as the Little Switzerland of Armenia. Short city tour in the old town, Sharambeyan Street. Home to numerous Armenian artists, composers and filmmakers, the town features some traditional Armenian architecture. Overnight in Dilijan.

Total Hiking: ~1.5 hours

Accommodation: Best Western Paradise Resort or similar

Day 19/Fri 29 May

Dilijan

Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast at the hotel. Explore the forested area of Dilijan, one of the most important resorts in Armenia, often referred to as the Little Switzerland of Armenia. The forested and reclusive city is home to numerous Armenian artists, composers, and filmmakers and features some traditional Armenian architecture. Today we take on hiking in Dilijan National Park. The trail begins at Parz Lich (Clear Lake), a small, picturesque lake nestled in Dilijan highlands. From here, we will trek through lush, dense woodlands, suddenly emerging in a vast grassy meadow from which we will descend to Gosh village, finishing our hike at the breathtaking medieval monastery of Goshavank, comfortably settled on the right side of the Getik River. Return to Dilijan. Rest and overnight at the hotel in Dilijan.

Total Hiking: ~3 hours

Accommodation: Best Western Paradise Resort or similar

Day 20/Sat 30 May

Dilijan-Garni-Geghard-Yerevan

Meals: Breakfast

After breakfast, depart to Lake Sevan, the Pearl of Armenia, and the largest alpine high mountain freshwater lake in the Caucasus region. Sightseeing on the Peninsula, enjoying the views over the lake. Proceed to Garni village and visit Garni Temple. The Armenian King Tiridates built it in the first century A.D. and it is dedicated to a heathen god, probably to Mithra, the god of the sun, whose figure stood in the depth of the sanctuary. Here we take short hiking to Azat river gorge. We reach the portion of the Gorge typically referred to as the Symphony of Stones, a unique and picturesque monument of nature, resembling stone pipes. Higher up the gorge of the Azat River, there is a magnificent monument of medieval Armenian architecture - Geghard monastery, inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage list. Geghard is another incredible ancient Armenian monastery, partly carved out of a mountain. Drive to the capital city, Yerevan. Check-in and overnight at the hotel in Yerevan.

Total Hiking: 1-1.5 hours

Accommodation: Grand Hotel or similar



Day 21/Sun 31 May

Yerevan

Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast at our hotel. Today we start our walking tour with an exploration of the vibrant capital of Armenia, Yerevan, where ancient culture is mixed with a modern lifestyle and great traditions. We start our walking tour from the Republic Square, the masterpiece of the architect Alexander Tamania and continue to Cascade, an open-air museum of modern art with massive stairways leading up to the Victory Park providing a fantastic overlook to the entire downtown from above. We are in the Opera House, a beautiful building, and hub of Yerevan. Freedom Square is behind it, surrounded by parks which have been taken over by outdoor cafes, and finally Swan Lake. Visit Yerevan Fruit Market where you can find variety of fruits and vegetables, local sweets and traditional dry fruits. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan.

Accommodation: Grand Hotel or similar



Day 22/Mon 01 June

Yerevan-Amberd Fortress-Letter Park-Zvartnots-Yerevan

Meals: Breakfast

After breakfast drive to Amberd and start hiking to the fortress that stands at an elevation of 2300 meters above sea level on the high cape. It is located in the canyon of two rivers high upon the southern slope of Mount Aragats. Close to Oshakan village, which is known for the final resting place of the Armenian Alphabet creator Mesrop Mashtot; we stop at the Armenian alphabet park. It represents huge stones set against the backdrop of Armenia's Mt. Aragats representing each of Armenian letter. Drive to the ruins of Zvartnots Temple (7th century) which is listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO (closed on Mondays). Zvartnots is an outstanding monument of world architecture, and evidence of the high level of the development of the artistic and engineering thought in the 7th-century Armenia. Drive back to Yerevan. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan. (B/-/-)

Total Hiking: 1.5hours

Accommodation: Grand Hotel or similar

Day 23/Tue 02 June

Yerevan-Airport (Yerevan)

Meals: Breakfast

Transfer to the airport and departure.

Important Information

- It can sometimes be difficult to confirm our preferred hotels in May and September in Baku and Yerevan.
- For the duration of this trip you will have three local guides, one in each country.
- VISAS Please always check 'passport and visas' for more details on visa application on this trip, though we always advise you to check with your nearest consulate for the most up to date visa information.