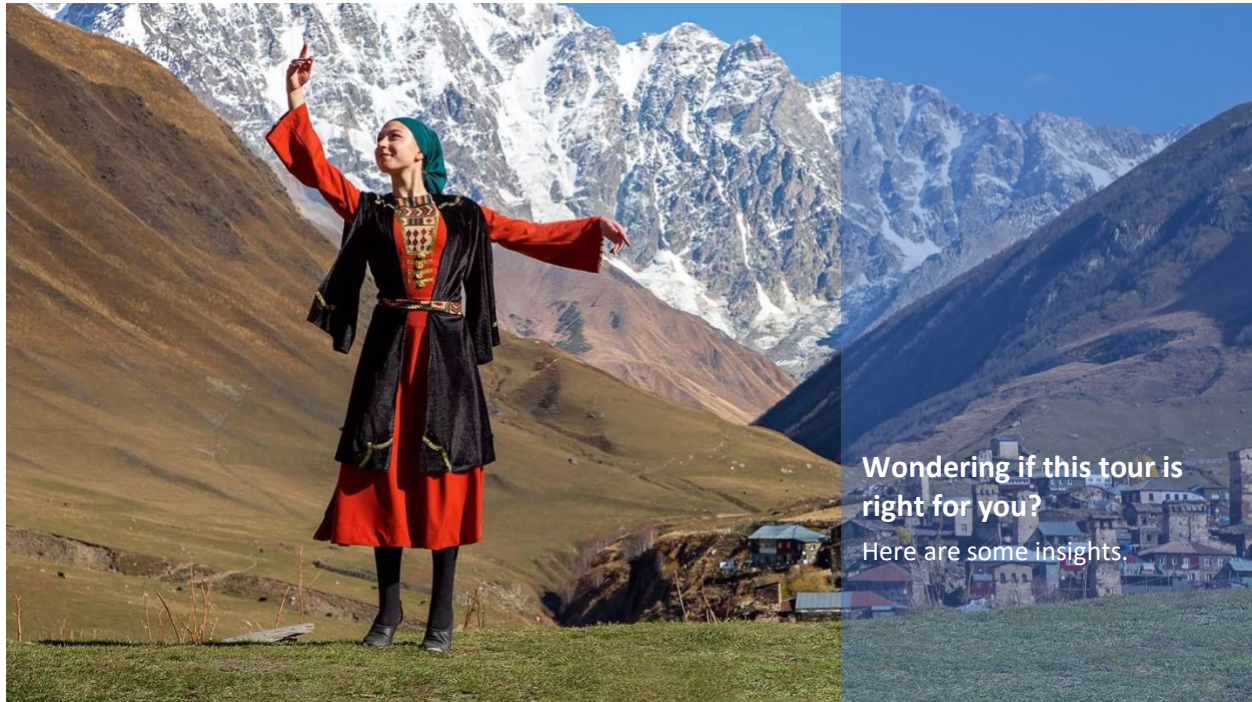




Georgia-Azerbaijan FAQs



Come with us for the legends of the Golden Fleece, folk arts, crafts textiles, stunning scenery, and warm and hospitable people. A flourishing food and wine scene is a bonus. Be prepared to fall in love!

A traveller post on social media when asked to describe Tbilisi

Take an old cobblestone city close to the mountains in Northern Italy.

Make the people even more proud of their wine industry (if that's possible).

Then add a solid helping of Soviet era architecture and public transport.

A dash of Arab and Persian influences to give it even more flavour (from centuries past).

Juxtapose some old flats that have seen better days, with some shiny new European stylings.

Consider that every meal involves the best cheese and bread/pastry that you're likely ever going to introduce your taste buds to.

Finally, take about 90% off the price of everything and picture folks that are incredibly eager to show tourists from all over the world a good time.

That still doesn't come close to explaining how unique this place is though and doesn't allow for the crazy scenery within 150km in any direction.

First off, how safe are these countries?

Your perception of safety is important. We urge you to visit your country's travel advisory consular site. Having said that, only a few places do not carry an advisory in today's geopolitical climate.



Azerbaijan is considered one of the safest countries for visitors, as long as you stay away from the border with Armenia and the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Our tour does not go anywhere near this area. Crime levels, muggings, and use of handguns is extremely low.

Georgia is also one of the safest countries, with extremely low crime rates. We stay far away from Russian-occupied South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Note on current protests

Georgia had been granted EU candidate status in 2023 but its path to membership has faltered as EU leaders said the media law amounted to "backsliding" by Tbilisi. The country has seen continuing protests since the disputed 2024 parliamentary elections. Protests are contained around the parliament buildings in Tbilisi which we will avoid.

IMPORTANT

How strenuous is this tour?

A good level of fitness is essential. Unless you enjoy unimpaired mobility, can cope with everyday walking and stair-climbing without difficulty, and are reliably sure-footed, this tour may not be for you.

You must be able to walk comfortably and without assistance at a moderate pace for one hour stretches. A moderate pace of walking is defined as 100 steps per minute. Visits to historical monuments and even some modern ones include stairs, as do some hotels. The ground may be uneven in older cities. There are some steep walks. Unruly traffic and the busy streets of larger cities require some vigilance. This tour involves private bus transfers on crowded urban roads. The longest transfer on this tour is 5hrs with 2-3 breaks.

Most sites have some shade, but the sun can be strong, even in the cooler seasons.

Secondly, our tours are group events. The presence of even one person who is not fit enough to cope can stress group leaders and guides, which ends up spoiling the experience for the rest of the group.

Please assess your fitness level as objectively as possible. Should you decide to join the tour and later develop immobility, please let us know immediately. The sooner we know, the higher the likelihood we can help you.

(When you register, express acknowledgement of fitness requirement will be required)

What are the hotels like?

Hotels on this tour are upgraded 4*, selected for cultural relevance, location, comfort, safety, and personal service. In all cases, these are the best available. All accommodations have private bathrooms and western-style toilets. 5* hotels are not necessarily better; they are frequently modern, geared towards the business traveller, lack traditional charm, and are not optimally located.



What is the comfort level of this tour?

On a scale of 0-5, where 5 = decadent luxury and 0 = basic camping, this tour is rated a 4. We explore villages and markets. Sometimes we invite you to explore the ruins of a monastery or take a meal with ethnic communities. These activities invariably add to your overall experience and are designed with your comfort and safety in mind. You can opt out if you wish.



Do I need a visa?

U.S and Canadian citizens do not need visas to enter Georgia. However, they do require e-visa for Azerbaijan <https://evisa.gov.az/en/>

If you're joining us in Armenia, U.S. citizens do not need a visa. However, Canadians will need an e-visa <https://www.mfa.am/en/visa/>

Please understand that it is your sole responsibility to possess a valid passport and visa prior to embarking on this tour.

What's the weather like?

September is early autumn in both countries, and the best time to experience the abundance of the land. It is the ideal season for cultural, culinary, and historical tours, as the weather is generally warm with occasional wind and rain. The average air temperature ranges from 25 °C (77 °F) during the day to 15 °C (59 °F) at night. There are 9 days of rain on average.

Armenia can be cooler due to the higher altitude.

What about clothes and valuables?

A comprehensive packing list will be supplied. Consider layering clothes. Pack a compact windbreaker and fleece hoodie, as well as warm socks, toque, and mittens in case of inclement weather. A hot water bottle comes in handy at bedtime. Comfortable closed-toed walking shoes are recommended. Dresses below the knees, and trousers and sleeveless dresses are acceptable. Leave all expensive jewelry and valuables at home.

What is the voltage?

All three countries have standard electrical voltage is 220 volts at a frequency of 50 hertz (Hz) with C and F power plugs and sockets.

What is the time zone?



Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia are 9 hours ahead of EST. They do not observe Daylight Savings Time.

What kind of bathrooms can I expect?

For all three countries, hotel stays and restaurants will offer western style toilets. On road transfers, toilets may be basic squat-type without toilet paper or soap. Carry hand sanitizer and TP. Public toilets can often be in a lamentable state. In Armenia, a small charge may be levied for using toilets along the way.

Staying in touch with the rest of the group? Can I call home?

We will stay in touch within the group via a Whatsapp chat group. In addition to alerts about daily activities, our chat groups are lively and informative. Familiarising yourself with the app will help you get more out of the tour.

Hotels offer WiFi connectivity. However, the speeds may not be optimal for downloading large files. For uninterrupted connectivity, get a phone plan from home or buy SIM cards in Georgia from Magti, Geocell, Cellfie, Silknet, and Ligne droite. SIM cards are available at retail stores, airport kiosks, and authorized resellers.

Azerbaijan's major mobile operators are Azercell, Bakcell, or Nar Mobile. These SIM cards can be bought at airport arrival halls, retail stores, and convenience stores, and usually require passport verification for activation.

You can also go the e-sim route.

Staying healthy before and during the tour

Both Georgia and Azerbaijan have good medical facilities in Baku and Tbilisi but can be expensive. We highly recommend you carry travel insurance, especially serious medical emergencies that may require evacuation. Non-serious medical problems like common upper respiratory infections and digestive illnesses can usually be treated with readily available over-the-counter remedies (ibuprofen/acetaminophen, Imodium/Pepto Bismol). Keep a list of your medications with their pharmaceutical names and dosage, as most common medicines are available in Georgia-Azerbaijan but often under other names.

Basic recommendations to avoid common travel ailments:

- Before the tour, get adequate sleep and rest for a moderately paced tour. Dealing with jet lag is easier when you are well-rested.
- In airports and on the plane, wear a mask; use hand sanitizer/wipes
- Stay well hydrated and avoid touching your face
- While touring, wash or sanitize your hands frequently.



In hotels and restaurants that cater to tourists, food is safely prepared. If you purchase fresh produce to consume, wash it thoroughly with bottled water and peel it. Safe bottled water is readily available throughout. Do not consume tap water and decline ice cubes in drinks.

What about drinking water?

We provide bottled drinking water while on the road. In the interest of reducing plastic waste, please consider bringing your own refillable water bottle.

In Georgia hotels, tap water is certified safe to drink. However, you may wish to purchase your own bottled water. In Azerbaijan, some hotels provide bottled drinking water.

What about the currency? (The information in this section will be updated closer to the tour dates)

Georgia currency is GEL or Georgia Lari. Currently 2.80 to 1 USD. Azerbaijan currency is AZN or Azerbaijani Manat, trades at 1.70 to 1 USD.

ATMs are common in larger cities and tourist areas but may be less common in rural areas. Euro and USD are commonly accepted for exchange at banks and money changers.

How much cash should I carry? In what currency?

Tour cost covers almost all expenses except a few meals, and of course, personal shopping. Prices have gone up considerably in Georgia and Azerbaijan over the past 3 years, but both countries continue to offer better value than most European countries.

Meals on your own range from USD 10-25.

Credit cards are widely accepted in Georgia, especially in cities. However, cash is still needed in markets and other rural areas.

What about tipping?

We run an additional \$150/person tipping kitty for drivers, guides, and artisans in Azerbaijan-Georgia, and USD 100 for Armenia. You may supplement if you wish. Any unused amounts will be democratically disbursed.

And shopping . . .?

The arts and crafts of this region include silk scarfs, wines, carpets, kilims, *minankari* enamel on silver



jewellery, ceramics, copperware, woodcarvings, paintings, silversmithing . . . the list goes on. Quality and the price vary widely. Bargaining is expected in open-air markets. To respect the creative process, we request no bargaining with artisans directly responsible for the product.

What about the food and dietary restrictions?

These countries have some of the most delicious cuisine in the Caucasus. Indeed, several included gastronomic meals are the additional bonus on this tour. We will try tasty and unique dishes, with fresh local ingredients, such as khinkhali and churchkela.

For the vegetarians/vegans, Azerbaijani cuisine contains mostly meat and dairy products. But you can find some great vegan salads, roasted vegetables, and spreads. Georgia surprisingly has plenty for vegans/vegetarians. Dishes such as Lobio (stewed red beans and spices baked in a clay pot), clay pot baked mushrooms, and aubergines baked with a walnut-garlic paste are some options. The fresh fruit and vegetables are often some of the best you'll taste.

Do I need any vaccinations?

No vaccinations are mandatory. At all times, follow the recommendations of your travel health clinic including shots for hepatitis A/B, typhoid, and Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Polio.

More questions? Contact shila@eyhotours.com