

A JOURNEY TO GEORGIA & ARMENIA  
WITH AMELIA

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4<sup>TH</sup>. -14<sup>TH</sup> /18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024





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# Itinerary Overview

Date	Location	Accommodation & Room Type	Basis
Days 1 - 5	Tbilisi	Amante Hotel	B/B
Days 5 - 6	Gori	Sioni Guesthouse	B/B
Days 6 - 8	Kutaisi	Communal Hotel	B/B
Days 8 - 10	Vardzia	Vardzia Resort	B/B
Days 10 - 11	Bolnisi	Muehle Bolnisi	B/B



# Itinerary Overview

Date	Location	Accommodation & Room Type	Basis
Days 11 - 12	Gyumri	Villa Kars	B/B
Days 12 - 15	Yerevan	Hotel Republica	B/B

*Please note:*

Should these hotels not be available similar accommodation will be found





## Tour Introduction

JOIN ME on an exploration of Georgia & Armenia over the Autumnal wine harvest, and as the landscape starts to show off its true colours. There will be much to enjoy with opportunities to meet remarkable craftsmen and women, wine makers, music and merri-makers and plenty more. This is a special journey and I promise much fun will be had – I look forward to hosting you as we travel together through these wonderful lands.

‘WHEREVER WE HAD BEEN in Russia, in Moscow, in the Ukraine, in Stalingrad, the magical name of Georgia came up constantly. People who had never been there, and who possibly never could go there, spoke of Georgia with a kind of longing and a great admiration. They spoke of Georgians as supermen, as great drinkers, great dancers, great musicians, great workers and lovers. And they spoke of the country in the Caucasus and around the Black Sea as a kind of second heaven. Indeed, we began to believe that most Russians hope that if they live very good and virtuous lives, they will go not to heaven, but to Georgia, when they die. It is a country favored in climate, very rich in soil, and it has its own little ocean. Great service to the state is rewarded by a trip to Georgia.’

*John Steinbeck: A Russian Journal*

All Romani dialects - about 60 in all – contain Armenian words, proof if you will that the Lom Boshia passed through Armenia in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, trading spices along the Great Silk Road, that ancient of tradi routes connecting China with the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The Roman traded Armenian carpets, silk, dyes, lapis lazuli and time, and it’s no surprise that five capitals of Armenia are on the The Great Silk Road.’

*Karl Wiggins, Searching for your Tribe*





*Amelia holding a kantsi (Georgian drinking horn)*



# YOUR TOUR LEADER

AMELIA STEWART

I first visited Georgia thirteen years ago and was instantly hooked. The people, the culture, the landscapes - it was a glimpse into a world quite different from the Northern African/Middle Eastern countries that I'd become so accustomed to. I had Georgia on my mind and vowed to return at some point. I've been living in Tbilisi now for two and a half years now, and I love it. The country has changed of course since my first visit, but the people haven't. Georgia now buzzes with possibility. Vast empty Soviet complexes have been turned into thriving cultural and artistic hubs in the capital, the burgeoning food scene is quite astonishing and with a fascinating and complex history and a determined and passionate people, there is never a dull moment. You could say that Georgia is certainly starting to get noticed. Now is the time to visit ☺

During my travels in Georgia & Armenia I've had many adventures and met some wonderful people along the way- those who now help weave extraordinary experiences into my tours that most visitors wouldn't get the opportunity to experience. During this tour, we'll get under the skin a bit - with some insider experiences in Tbilisi, before journeying across western Georgia to explore small family run wineries and off the beaten track Monasteries. Both countries make a great combination to visit together with landscapes at this time of year a colourful hue in Autumn. If you're interested, I've written some stories for BBC radio that you can listen to [HERE](#).





# Detailed Itinerary

📅 Day 1 /2 - Fri 4<sup>th</sup> Oct /Sat 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Depart UK/Arrive Tbilisi



### Flights:

There are a few options to fly from the UK to Tbilisi with a connection – please contact me to discuss the best option to suit you.

On arrival in Tbilisi you will all be met and transferred to your hotel in the capital. **Note:** There will be one main group transfer. For those arriving on different flights, separate transfers will be provided. *Transfer time approx. 25 mins*



**Accommodation:** Amante Hotel Tbilisi



Day 3 /Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Explore Old Tbilisi

Today we'll be sightseeing the capital, with a walk through the old town with visits to Metechi church (12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> Century), the district of the Sulfur bathhouses and Sioni Cathedral – the main church of Tbilisi. Narikhala Fortress has great views overlooking the city, and you will visit the National Museum. Some of the tour will be on foot: the best way to walk through the cobbled streets of the Old Town and along Rustaveli Avenue. There will be some surprise insider experiences along the way 😊



**Accommodation:** Amante Hotel Tbilisi







# Detailed Itinerary

Day 4 / Mon 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Explore Tbilisi

We set off north from the capital to explore Mtskheta, one of the oldest towns in Georgia, and its religious heart. Located at the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers, Mtskheta was a crossroad of many trade routes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC. Jvari Church (6<sup>th</sup> Century) is a masterpiece of the early medieval period. Visit the Svetitskovieli Cathedral and the Church of St Nino at Samtavro with the tombs of King Mirian and Queen Nana. Lunch in Mtskheta before continuing to a local winery to learn about the ancient art of winemaking in the country. Return to Tbilisi in the late afternoon.

 **Accommodation:** AmanteTbilisi

 Day 5 / Tues 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Tbilisi – Gori – Sioni

This morning we depart Tbilisi for western Georgia heading first to Uplistikhe cave city before transferring onto Gori, the birthplace of Stalin. We'll visit the museum, the house he grew up and his private train carriage before going to see a local ceramicist. We then journey to Sioni for lunch and base ourself at the house in the hills of Nika Vacheishvili. An afternoon to potter in the hills or visit the gorgeous Sioni church nearby. *Transfer time approx. 2hrs*

 **Accommodation:** Sioni Guesthouse





# Detailed Itinerary

📅 Day 6/Wed 9<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Sioni – Katskhi pillar – Kutaisi

This morning we depart Sioni after breakfast to start the journey west towards the second biggest city in the country: Kutaisi. We stop at the 40 m limestone monolith known as Katskhi pillar where a working monastery still exists at the top before continuing our journey to Kutaisi. On arrival, settle into our hotel for a two night stay and explore some of the city in the afternoon.

*Transfer time approx. 3.5hrs*

🛏️ **Accommodation:** Communal Hotel Kutaisi

📅 Day 7 /Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> Oct

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## Kutaisi – Gelati – Motsameta – Tskaltubo - Kutaisi

A relaxed start to the morning before journeying out of the city to the beautiful monasteries of Motsameta and Gelati, founded by David the Builder, King of Georgia from 1089-1125. Return to Kutaisi, and an optional visit to the Soviet spa town of Tskaltubo (25 minutes from Kutaisi), home to an array of crumbling hotels, sanitoriums and bath houses as well as Stalin's favourite spa – an extraordinary place to visit where one section of the building has been kept as is. Lunch before returning to our hotel in the afternoon. *Transfer time approx. 1hr*


🛏️ **Accommodation:** Communal Hotel Kutaisi







# Detailed Itinerary

 Day 8 /Fri 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Kutaisi – Vani – Borjomi -Vardzia

Today, we check out of Kutaisi and continue our journey south east with a first stop to the impressive little museum of Vani. From 8<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC, Vani was the religious centre of Kolkheti – the country of the Golden Fleece, many gold artefacts and archaeological findings make this settlement of crucial important for studying antiquity. Our journey continues via the National park of Borjomi for lunch and continues south to the extraordinary cave city of Vardzia where we spend two nights. *Transfer time: 5.5hrs*

 **Accommodation:** Vardzia Resort

 Day 9/Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Vardzia

A relaxing day off the road today with a visit to the incredible cave monastery site of Vardzia, excavated from the slopes of the Erusheti Mountain on the left bank of the Kura River. The caves stretch along the cliff for some five hundred meters and in up to nineteen tiers and the monastery was an important cultural center, a place of significant literary and artistic work during the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. An afternoon at our leisure enjoying the guesthouse and surround area. *Transfer time approx. 3.5hrs*

 **Accommodation:** Vardzia Resort





# Detailed Itinerary

 Day 10/Sun 13th Oct 2024

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## Vardzia - Bolnisi

We depart Vardzia today and continue our journey south into the Kvemo Kartli region skirting the vast lake of Paravani and the small town of Tsalka. Bolnisi was settled by 95 German colonist families from Swabia in 1818, whilst part of the Georgia Governorate of the Russian Empire. It's an interesting city with a flourishing wine industry and the wonderful cathedral of Bolnisi Sioni – the oldest Christian structure in the country. We arrive into Bolnisi in the late afternoon for our final night in the country with fine food and wine!

*Transfer time approx. 4hrs*

 **Accommodation:** Muehle Bolnisi

 Day 11/Mon 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Bolnisi – Tbilisi OR Bolnisi – Sadakhlo – Gyumri (Armenia)

Those who want to, split from the group and transfer back to Tbilisi airport for a flight back to the UK.

Those who continue the journey continue the drive south and cross the border into Armenia with a change in local guide and driver. We visit the monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin – some of the greatest examples of medieval Armenian architecture, before continuing south to the black stone city of Gyumri for one night.

*Transfer time approx. 3hrs*

 **Accommodation:** Villa Kars, Gyumri





# Detailed Itinerary

Day 12 /Tues 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Gyumri - Yerevan

This morning we explore some of the fantastic 18th-19th century architecture of the city exploring the lifestyle of the Gyumretsis, and the birthplace of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff. We visit the Museum of the Aslamazyan Sisters, two remarkable and beloved Armenian artists of the Soviet era who broke all the conventions in the visual art world at that time. We continue to the capital Yerevan for a three night stay and an afternoon exploring more of the wonderful galleries here.

*Transfer time approx. 2hrs*

 **Accommodation:** Republica Hotel, Yerevan

 Days 13 / Wed 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Exploring Yerevan

We start our tour of the city from Republic Square and continue to the Cascade Complex, an open-air museum of modern art providing a fantastic overlook to the entire downtown from above and a glimpse of Ararat. We visit the Matenadaran – a wonderful library/depository that is home to books, manuscripts, Gospels from long bygone eras of Europe and Asia. There will also be plenty of time to browse the handicraft goods and trinkets at Vernissage flea market.

 **Accommodation:** Republica Hotel, Yerevan






# Detailed Itinerary

 Day 14 /Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Yerevan – Khor Virap – Echmiatsin – Zvartnots - Yerevan

This morning we journey south from the capital to the monastery of Khor Virap with incredible views looking towards Mt Ararat. We explore Echmiadzin cathedral, regarded as the spiritual centre of the country and visit the Treasury Museum before heading to the ruins of Zvartnots temple en route back to the capital. Visit the eclectic museum of Armenian painter Lusik Aguletsi before our final dinner in the country.  
*Transfer time approx. 3.5hrs*


 **Accommodation:** Republica Hotel Yerevan

 Day 15 /Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

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## Yerevan – Depart

Check out of our for a group transfer to the airport. Should your flight be different to the main transfer there will be a small additional cost.  
*Total Transfer time approx. 20 mins*

 **Flights:**  
There are a few options to fly back to the UK – please contact me to discuss the best to suit you.

TOUR ENDS





Making lavash, Armenia by Amelia



## Itinerary Cost

£3075 pp (min 6 pax) Georgia only

£4000 per person (min 6 pax) Georgia & Armenia

Should the group size reach 8, the price is reduced

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### Includes

- Amelia to accompany the tour throughout
- Accommodation in hotels as described
- Excellent local guides in Georgia & Armenia
- All airport transfers (1 group transfer on arrival and departure)
- Professional driver in a comfortable minibus
- All cultural tours and sightseeing as described
- All Meals
- Entrance fees to all sites and museums as noted
- Water every day in the vehicle

### Excludes

- International flights
- Single Supplement (£490 Georgia/£150 Armenia)
- Room upgrades
- Additional Excursions and sightseeing
- Additional transfers
- Gratuities (A set amount per person to be detailed in Final documents)
- Comprehensive Travel Insurance





# Practical Information



## How to Book & Pay

Please complete and return the Booking Form together with a 20% deposit payment per person to confirm your tour.



## Getting there

Niall or Dexter at Dial a Flight are both very helpful and will book your flights for you. Please call 020-8565-3020 and speak to them directly.



## Accommodation

See details to accommodation chosen. The hotels chosen are all lovely 3\* and 4\* hotels in good locations. Outside of the capitals accommodation is generally a little more basic. All rooms have private bathrooms.



## Guides & support

I will be hosting you throughout the tour as well as local guides in Georgia and Armenia. I advise you to bring a good guide book with you too.



## Food & Drink

Armenia & Georgia are fast becoming noticed on the International scene for food and wine -all meals are included - make sure you try everything!





# Practical Information



## Insurance

It's vital that you take out adequate travel insurance to cover your holiday. [Campbell Irvine](#) are good as are [Allianz Direct](#)



## Visa requirements

At the time of writing there are currently no visa requirements for UK passport holders to Armenia & Georgia



## Inoculation requirements

Further information on Armenia & Georgia stats for Covid can be found through the [WHO website](#).



## Weather

Early summer and Autumn are the best times to visit Georgia and Armenia. Our tour coincides with the wine harvest in Tbilisi and autumnal colours in both countries

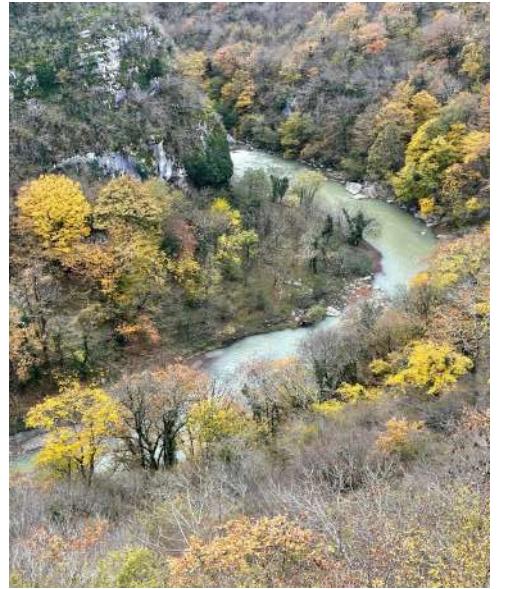


## Tipping

Further information will be provided on the final documents sent out prior to departure.







[www.ameliastewarttravel.com](http://www.ameliastewarttravel.com)

