



Golden Eagle - The Caspian Odyssey

Days	Eastbound	Countries	Distance	Activity level
16	Yerevan to Almaty	Armenia + Georgia + Azerbaijan + Uzbekistan + Kazakhstan	4400	● ○ ○ ○ ○



Embark on a pilgrimage through paradise, with this 16-day immersive showcase of the mysticised lands of the Caspian Sea. From Armenia to Kazakhstan, this epic adventure heads east through a magnificent backdrop of majestic medieval cities, breath-taking archaeological architecture, and palatial Islamic masterpieces.

Itinerary

Day 1: Yerevan

Upon arrival, you are met and transferred to the five-star Alexander Hotel, where we stay for two nights. Ideally located in the heart of Yerevan's historic quarter, The Alexander offers an exceptional blend of refined elegance and contemporary comfort. The hotel's beautifully preserved façade, dating back to the 18th century, provides a fascinating glimpse into Armenia's rich architectural and cultural heritage.

For early arrivals, enjoy a Freedom of Choice excursion this afternoon:



Freedom of Choice – Option 1:

Visit Etchmiadzin, the spiritual centre of the Armenian Apostolic Church and often referred to as the “Vatican of Armenia.” Founded in 301 AD, it is widely regarded as the oldest cathedral in the world. During our visit, we explore the Treasury Museum of Etchmiadzin, which houses some of Christianity's most revered relics, including fragments of the True Cross, a piece believed to be from Noah's Ark, and the Holy Spear said to have pierced the body of Christ.

Continuing our journey, we make a brief stop at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Zvartnots Cathedral, an extraordinary 7th-century architectural masterpiece renowned for its distinctive circular design.

Freedom of Choice – Option 2:

Alternatively, join a guided walking tour through central Yerevan, discovering the city's lively streets, elegant architecture, and key landmarks that reflect its unique blend of ancient heritage and modern life.

This evening, we gather for a Welcome Dinner at an authentic local restaurant — a perfect opportunity to meet fellow travellers and look ahead to an extraordinary journey across six captivating countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Why not consider extending your stay in Yerevan with additional pre-tour nights, allowing time to further explore this fascinating city and its surrounding region at your leisure?

Why not extend your stay in Yerevan with additional nights before the tour to explore more of the city and region at your leisure?

Meals - Dinner

Itinerary (cont.)

Day 2: Yerevan and Lake Sevan

This morning we explore one of Yerevan's most distinctive landmarks, The Cascade — a monumental limestone stairway adorned with sculptures, fountains, and terraces. As we ascend, we enjoy sweeping views across central Yerevan, with Mount Ararat often rising majestically on the horizon.

From here, we visit the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial, a deeply moving complex completed in 1967 to commemorate the 1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives during the genocide of the early 20th century. Set on a hill overlooking the city, the memorial provides a powerful and reflective space of remembrance.

Departing Yerevan, our journey continues to Lake Sevan, one of the largest high-altitude freshwater lakes in the world. We stop here for lunch, enjoying stunning views across the shimmering waters. Along with Lake Van and Lake Urmia, Lake Sevan was historically regarded as one of the three great lakes of the ancient Armenian Kingdom — collectively known as the Seas of Armenia — and is now the only one located within the borders of the modern Republic of Armenia.

After lunch, we return to Yerevan for an optional visit to the renowned Yerevan Ararat Brandy Factory, where Armenia's iconic brandy has been produced for generations.

This evening, enjoy a dine-around dinner at a selection of carefully chosen local restaurants located near our hotel, offering the opportunity to savour a variety of Armenian flavours at leisure.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 3: Yerevan and to Tbilisi

Today's touring takes us just outside Yerevan to the remarkable Geghard Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This extraordinary complex of medieval churches and tombs is partially carved directly into the surrounding rock, creating a striking harmony between architecture and nature. Dramatically set amid towering cliffs at the head of the Azat Valley, Geghard is one of Armenia's most spiritually resonant and visually compelling landmarks.

We also visit the pagan Temple of Garni, dating from the 1st century AD and dedicated to the Sun God Mithra. Perched high above a deep gorge, Garni is Armenia's only surviving Greco-Roman colonnaded temple. Here, we explore the remains of an ancient fortress, royal palace, and bath complex before enjoying lunch in this spectacular setting.

Alternatively, guests may choose a gentle walk through Garni Gorge, following the right bank of the Azat River to admire the extraordinary natural formation known as the "Symphony of Stones" or Basalt Organ. This striking geological monument consists of towering hexagonal and pentagonal basalt columns formed by ancient lava flows that cooled slowly over time. Rising up to 50 metres, the perfectly aligned columns resemble the pipes of a giant organ, creating one of Armenia's most celebrated natural wonders.

After an authentic Armenian lunch, we continue to the airport for our private charter flight to Tbilisi. This evening we arrive in the Georgian capital, where we stay for the next three nights at the Paragraph Freedom Square, a Luxury Collection Hotel.

Tonight, enjoy dinner in the hotel accompanied by a traditional folk performance — a lively and atmospheric introduction to Georgia.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 4: Tbilisi

Hemmed in by the Surami Range, the city of Tbilisi stretches for nearly 17 miles (27 km) along the banks of the River Kura. Despite centuries marked by wars and fires that reshaped much of the city's landscape, Tbilisi's Old Town has retained much of its original character — a captivating spider's web of narrow, winding streets and hidden alleyways.

Our sightseeing includes a visit to the 13th-century Metekhi Church, a cross-cupola church forming part of the former royal residential complex and dramatically overlooking the river. We also explore the 5th-century Sioni Cathedral, the principal church of Tbilisi, before continuing on foot to discover the atmospheric streets of the Old Town.

We then depart the city for the elegant Chateau Mukhrani Wine Estate, where we enjoy a delicious lunch followed by an afternoon of local wine tasting, introducing Georgia's renowned winemaking traditions in a historic and scenic setting.

After lunch, you may choose to continue exploring the Old Town on foot, visiting highlights such as Gabriadze's Clock Tower, Baratashvili Street, and the historic Anchiskhati Basilica (approximately a one-hour walking tour), or return to the hotel to relax at leisure.

This evening, enjoy a dine-around experience at selected local restaurants, allowing you to savour Tbilisi's vibrant culinary scene at your own pace.

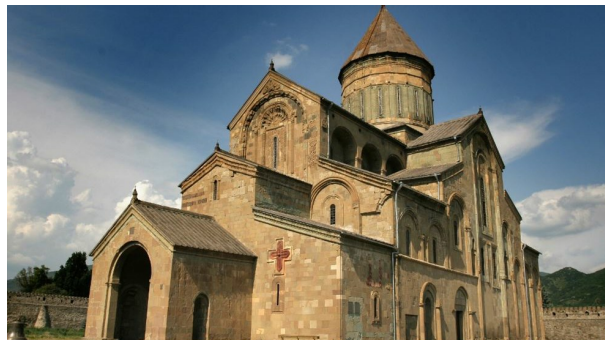
Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 5: Tbilisi – Gori or Uplistsikhe and Mtskheta

One option takes us to Gori, one of Georgia's oldest cities, founded in the 7th century AD and best known as the birthplace of Joseph Stalin, born here in 1879. During our visit, we see the modest house where Stalin spent his early childhood, now preserved beneath a protective canopy. Adjacent stands the imposing, columned building that houses the Stalin Museum, with exhibits that offer a haunting and thought-provoking insight into the life of one of the most controversial and consequential figures of the 20th century. Nearby, Stalin's private railway carriage is also on display. Alternatively, guests may choose to visit a local Ceramics Museum, showcasing the traditional works of renowned Georgian ceramicist George Tatulashvili.



The second option leads to the remarkable ancient cave city of Uplistsikhe, dating back to the 6th century BC and first mentioned in written chronicles of the 1st century AD. Carved into a rocky plateau, this extraordinary site reveals vast echoing halls, winding corridor-streets, chambers once used for pagan worship, and even the remains of Georgia's oldest theatre, complete with auditorium, stage, and orchestra pit. Strategically positioned above the Mtkvari River and protected by sheer rock faces and strong fortifications, Uplistsikhe once played a vital role in controlling the surrounding region. Despite numerous attempts to destroy it, the city survived until the 13th century, when the forces of Khulagu, son of Genghis Khan, finally succeeded in capturing and devastating the fortress. The loss of its 5,000 inhabitants marked the end of life here forever, lending the site a profound historical atmosphere.

Lunch today is served at a rustic local restaurant, accompanied by a private performance of traditional Georgian polyphonic singing — an immersive cultural experience that offers a unique and deeply moving introduction to Georgia's musical heritage.

Later this afternoon, our explorations continue to Mtskheta, Georgia's ancient capital and spiritual heart. Renowned for its historical importance and wealth of early Christian monuments, the city was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

This evening, enjoy a dine-around experience at local restaurants, dining at your leisure and sampling Georgia's rich culinary traditions.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

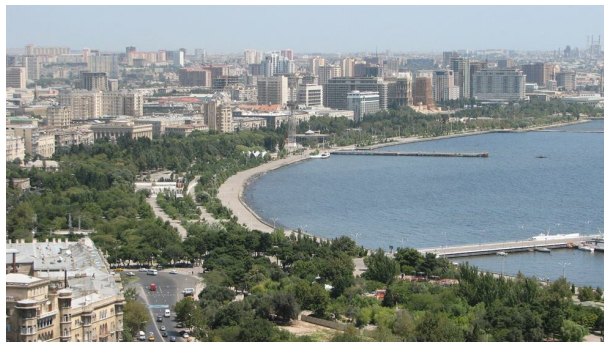
Itinerary (cont.)

Day 6: Tbilisi to Baku

This morning, we visit the Janashia State Museum of Georgia, home to an exceptional collection of archaeological treasures. Highlights include exquisite gold filigree jewellery dating back to the 6th century BC, offering remarkable insight into the artistry and cultural sophistication of ancient Georgian civilisations.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we transfer to the airport and board our private jet for the short flight to Baku. Upon arrival in the Azerbaijani capital, we check in for a three-night stay at the elegant Four Seasons Hotel Baku, superbly located along the Caspian Sea waterfront.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Day 7: Baku

Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, lies on the western shore of the Caspian Sea and the southern side of the Apsheron Peninsula, around the wide, curving sweep of the Bay of Baku. The bay, sheltered by the islands of the Baku Archipelago, provides the best harbour of the Caspian Sea, while the Apsheron Peninsula gives protection from violent northerly winds. Baku derives its international importance from its huge oil industry. The core of present-day Baku is the Old Town, or fortress of Icheri-Shekher. Most of the walls, strengthened after the Russian conquest in 1806, survive, as does the 90 ft (27 m) tower of Kyz-Kalasy (Maiden Tower, 12th century). The walled old town is highly picturesque, with its maze of narrow alleys and ancient buildings. These include the Palace of the Shirvan-Shahs, now a museum, the oldest part of which dates from the 11th century. Also of the 11th century is the Synk-Kala Minaret and Mosque (1078-79). We will tour these historic sights by bus before exploring the Old Town by foot.

After lunch in a local restaurant, enjoy an afternoon of free time to discover Baku independently. Perhaps visit the local Carpet Museum, indulge in a cultural escape at the National Museum, or simply relax and soak up Azerbaijan's unique atmosphere.

Tonight, we visit the magnificent Villa Petrolea. Nearly 150 years ago, before the Nobel Peace Prizes were created, the Nobel brothers themselves played a key role in Baku's first 'oil boom'. The mansion that they built as their residence in the early 1880s has been preserved, restored, and turned into a fascinating museum. It is here we will be privileged to have a guided tour and treated to champagne, canapes, and a sumptuous dinner within its historic walls.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 8: Baku

This morning we tour the UNESCO-honoured Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. Located 40 miles (64 km) from Baku on the west bank of the Caspian Sea, Gobustan is an outstanding archaeological site of more than 6,000 pre-historic rock engravings. The area also features the remains of inhabited caves, settlements and burials. This is followed by lunch overlooking the Caspian Sea.

Returning to the city in the afternoon, you can choose to enjoy free time in the city or visit a local Zoroastrian temple before dinner in the Four Seasons Hotel.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Day 9: Khiva

Following breakfast we take a morning flight onboard our private plane to Urgench (for Khiva). Founded 2,500 years ago Khiva became one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts as it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia and is now a World Heritage Site.

A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. Stepping back in time, we discover its impressive mosques, madrassas, bazaars and minarets within the city's ancient walls.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 10: Bukhara

Bukhara is quite simply outstanding. Like Khiva, UNESCO sponsored the renovation of much of the city for its 2,500th anniversary in 1999.

The highlight of this wonderful tour is a visit to The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara – the despotic and ruthless leaders who ruled until Soviet times. Our touring programme will also transport us to the grandeur of Poi-Kalyan Square, home to the iconic Kalyan Mosque, a living relic of traditional Islamic design. Stroll through the mosque's large pillar-domed galleries and deeply recessed niches and be transported to a bygone era.

Immerse yourself in the lively pulse of the city as we explore the bustling Trading Domes of Bukhara and gather at Lyabi-Hauz Square, a vibrant social hub cocooned by a pool and embraced by the soothing shade of mulberry trees and local tea rooms.

This evening, weather permitting, we will enjoy a barbecue on the station platform before our train departs – a unique farewell to an incredible city.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



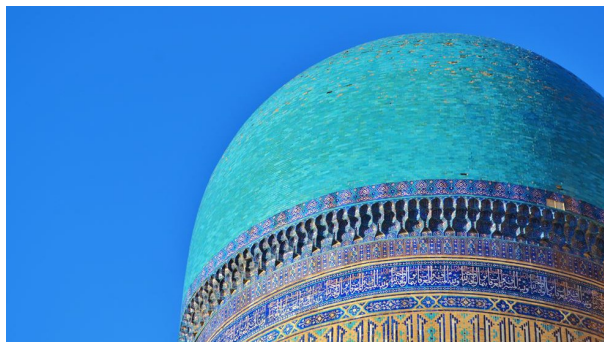
Day 11: Samarkand

More so than any other town, just the mention of Samarkand instantly conjures up evocative images of the Silk Road. Founded in the 6th century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture hints at its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia and is particularly noted for its architectural remains from the 14th to the 17th century, when it flourished as the fabled capital of the Mongol empire of Timur and his successors.

Today we will visit some of its most significant sites including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Ulag Beg observatory, one of the earliest Islamic astronomical observatories built in 1428.

Prepare for an unforgettable evening in Samarkand that will leave an indelible mark on your memory. As the sun sets and night descends upon this ancient city, we will whisk you away to the illuminated Registan Square, where an extraordinary spectacle unfolds. From your prime front-row seats, you'll be treated to a dazzling light show that weaves the rich tapestry of Samarkand's history and significance.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 12: Tashkent

Tashkent is the capital city of Uzbekistan and we spend time touring this modern Soviet-style city which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966. Our tour of the city includes the Old Town, where traditional homes and religious buildings line the narrow streets and here in a small library we'll be privileged to see one of Islam's most sacred relics – the world's oldest Koran. This is followed by a visit to the Museum of Applied Arts.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

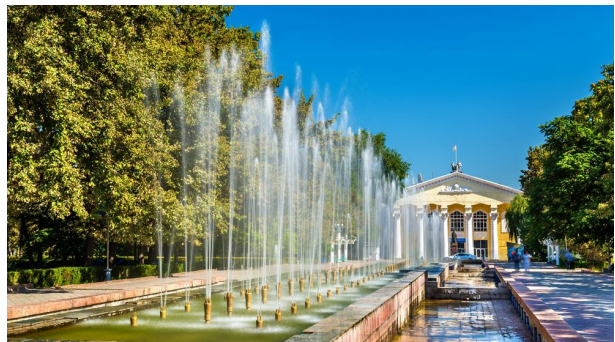


Day 13: Bishkek

Enjoy a more leisurely pace today as we travel through the beautiful landscapes of Uzbekistan, before crossing the border into Kyrgyzstan. Late afternoon we arrive in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, disembark from the train for a short introduction tour.

Our guided city tour introduces Bishkek's distinctive Soviet-era character, with visits to Ala-Too Square — constructed in 1984 to mark the 60th anniversary of the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic — and a selection of the city's leafy parks. These public spaces offer a fascinating insight into the country's 20th-century history and include monuments and statues dedicated to figures such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as well as the Memorial to the Red Guards.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner



Itinerary (cont.)

Day 14: Lake Issyk-Kul

Today, we enjoy an extended visit to the magnificent Lake Issyk-Kul, a true natural wonder nestled in the heart of the Kyrgyz mountains. Stretching over 170 kilometres in length and up to 70 kilometres wide, it is recognised as the second-largest alpine lake in the world. Its name, meaning “warm lake”, reflects its remarkable resistance to freezing – the result of a unique combination of depth, mineral richness, and geothermal activity beneath its surface. Framed by towering, snow-capped peaks, the lake offers a serene beauty.



This morning, we invite you to immerse yourself in the rich nomadic heritage of Kyrgyzstan with a privately arranged cultural event along the lake's shores. A captivating display of traditional sports and games that have been passed down through generations. While archery may be familiar, few have encountered the spectacle of horseback wrestling, hunting with majestic Golden Eagles, or “ordo” – a strategic game played with cow kneecaps.

This experience is a celebration of steppe culture in all its vibrant detail – from music and dance to intricate costumes and demonstrations of time-honoured crafts. It is a rare and enthralling glimpse into a way of life that continues to flourish in the highlands of Central Asia. This day promises a unique and authentic insight into the cultural heart of the region, offering memories that will linger long after your journey ends.

After the festival there will be the option to visit the outdoor Museum of the Petroglyphs before returning to the Golden Eagle for the Farewell Dinner.

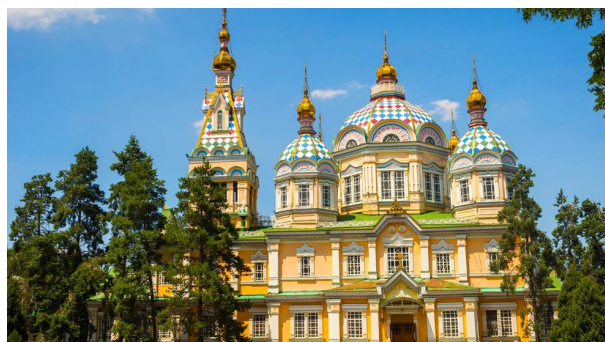
This evening we enjoy our Farewell Dinner onboard the *Golden Eagle* as we head overnight to our final destination of Almaty.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 15: Almaty

This morning, we arrive into Almaty, our final destination and bid farewell to the *Golden Eagle*. Today we will take a tour of Almaty including a visit to Panfilov Park, located in the heart of the city, and home to the Zenkov Cathedral, a 19th century Russian Orthodox Church made entirely of wood.

Overnight we stay for one night at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Almaty



Meals - Breakfast

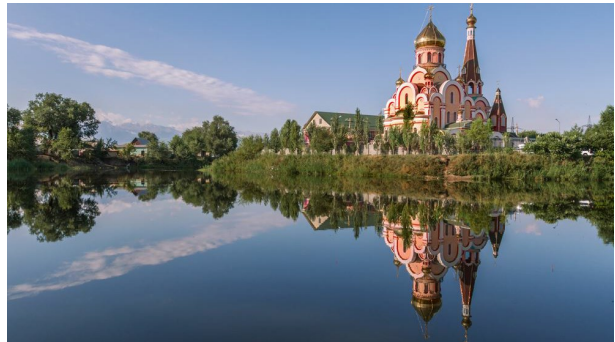
Itinerary (cont.)

Day 16: Almaty

Following breakfast you will be transferred to Almaty Airport for your onward flight.

Why not extend your stay in Almaty with additional nights to explore more of the city and surrounding region at your leisure?

Meals - Breakfast



What's included



Group size

Maximum of 25 people to one guide for city touring.



Meals

15 breakfasts
14 lunches
15 dinners



Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are included.



Accommodation

9 nights hotel

6 nights onboard Golden Eagle



Sightseeing and Tipping

Onboard entertainments and off train excursions.



Expertise

Tour Managers and Guides.

Contact Us

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