



## ANGEL PROGRAM TOURS

### Georgia: The Local Experience!

Excursion Program: **7 days / 6 nights**

Sites to visit: **Tbilisi » Jvari » Mtskheta » Uplistsikhe » Ujarma » Telavi » Tsinandali » Kvareli » Borjomi » Ananuri » Cross Pass » Kazbegi**

### Program

#### **DAY 1/ Tbilisi**

Arrival in Tbilisi, meeting at the airport of Tbilisi, transfer to the hotel, check-in. A little rest. Lunch (either on the way from the airport, or after check-in, will depend on the time of arrival). Next: Walking tour of the Old City (Metekhi Temple - Narikala Fortress - Sulfur Baths - Mosque - Meydan Square - Sharden Street - Sioni Temple - Anchiskhati Church - Peace Bridge). After the sightseeing tour, transfer for dinner to a restaurant with Georgian dances.

#### **DAY 2/ Jvari - Mtskheta - Uplistsikhe**

After breakfast we go to Uplistsikhe - the first Georgian cave city. It is believed that the city was formed around 1000 BC, and finally emptied only in the 19th century. Before the adoption of Christianity, Uplistsikhe was a sacred, cult center of the state of Kartli (Iberia). The main one was the Temple of the Sun on the highest point of the city. Today in Uplistsikhe you can see caves located in groups and interconnected by paths-transitions. Part of the caves (central ensemble, palace complex, churches) is richly ornamented. After Uplistsikhe there will be a little early lunch, and then we continue our journey through the country's cult places. Visit to the Jvari Temple ("Temple of the Holy Cross"). It stands on a high mountain, from where a beautiful panorama of the confluence of two majestic rivers Aragvi and Mtkvari. According to legend, on this very mountain, the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Nino herself erected a cross. Jvari is the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in Georgia. In addition, as they say, Jvari is the same monastery that Lermontov wrote about in his poem "Mtsyri". The ancient capital of the Eastern Georgian kingdom - Kartli (Iveria) - the city of Mtskheta. This is a sacred for every Georgian. The city remained the capital until the 5th century. For the unique Christian relics, Mtskheta is called the "Second Jerusalem". We will visit the Svetitskhoveli Temple (translated as "Life-Giving Pillar", at the base of which one of the main Christian shrines, the Chiton of the Lord, is buried, and this is also the burial place of many Georgian kings). We will also visit the ancient monastery of Samtavro (Saint Nino lived and preached here in the 4th century). Return to Tbilisi, dinner.

#### **DAY 3/ Tbilisi - Ujarma - Telavi - Tsinadndali - Kvareli -**

On this day we will travel around the Kakheti region. Our first visit is the fortress of Ujarma. The city was founded around the 3rd century. AD and became famous for serving as a residence for the king Vakhtang Gorgasali (2nd half of the 5th century). The city fell into decay after the fortress was destroyed by the Arabs in the 10th century. This fortress is also known for the fact that, according to legend, St. Nino "raised one of the three crosses" here. Light lunch on the way. We drive to Telavi, the capital of the Kakheti region. The city is located in the Alazani Valley, at an altitude of 490 m above sea level, so the air is fresh here, and the landscapes of the surroundings are impressive. Telavi is the oldest city in Georgia. Our next stop is the Tsinandali estate (Alexander Chavchavadze's house-museum), which attracts visitors with its history, beautiful park and famous wine cellar (wine tasting is optional). Alexander Chavchavadze (1786 - 1846) - a brilliantly educated aristocrat, a military general, a participant in the war with Napoleon, a wise politician, an active public figure and a poet. A. Pushkin, A. Griboedov, the Decembrists liked to visit his house. Here you can take wonderful photos against the backdrop of beautiful nature. And finally, we go to Kvareli, where a Georgian family is waiting for us, who have their own vineyards, marani and wonderful wine of their own production. We are waiting for a delicious lunch (a little late), acquaintance with the traditions of Georgian winemaking, wine tasting and master classes in cooking Georgian dishes. Return to Tbilisi.

#### **Day 4/ Borjomi**

Borjomi is a pleasant, resort, green town located in the Borjomi Gorge and famous for its mineral water. Here is a wonderfully beautiful nature and a unique healing climate. But it is thanks to the mineral water of Borjomi that he became famous all over the world. This is a gorge city, and because of this, all its buildings are stretched in a line along the river bank for about 5 km. Borjomi architecture is completely unique for Georgia. At one time, mansions were built here in a variety of styles, up to the mysterious look of castles. We will walk through the beautiful Borjomi park, taste the mineral water directly from the springs. Lunch in Borjomi, and after lunch we visit the local history museum in Borjomi (one of the most interesting), or the Green Monastery, it is not far from Borjomi. Return to Tbilisi, dinner.

#### **Day 5/ Ananuri - Cross Pass - Kazbegi**

We are going to the highlands of the country. Our path to the mountains runs along the Georgian Military Highway, which began to be built at the end of the 18th century. For a long time, it remained the only route from Russia to Georgia and the Caucasus in general. On the way we will visit Ananuri Fortress. The fortress was built in the 16th century and was the residence of the Aragvi feudal lords - eristavis, the rulers of this region, who played prominent role in the political life of Eastern Georgia in the 17th century.



It has been attacked and destroyed many times, but most of the fortress has been preserved. This building even today evokes a feeling of power and strength. From the fortress, wonderful landscapes open up to the Aragvi River and the picturesque Zhinvali reservoir. Further, our path lies in Pasanauri, the homeland of khinkali. We will learn how to make khinkali, eat them correctly (we will have lunch there), and continue our journey. We drive past the famous ski resort of Gudauri and through the Cross Pass, named after the famous stone was placed here in 1824. We arrive in the Kazbegi (Stepantsminda) region. Here at an altitude of 2170m is the amazing Gergeti Trinity Church (XIV century). This rather large church from below seems like a tiny dot against the backdrop of the giant Mount Kazbek (5047 m), covered with eternal snow. Near the church there is a monastery complex, in which the monks still live. We go up to the church on an off-road vehicle, inspect it and admire the beautiful views of the mountains. We return to Tbilisi. Dinner.

#### DAY 6/ Tbilisi

Free time for independent walks in Tbilisi.

#### DAY 7/ Tbilisi

Transfer to the airport of Tbilisi.

#### What is included in the tour price:

- Russian speaking guide
- Transport service according to the tour program + transfer airport-hotel-airport
- Entrance tickets according to the tour program
- Lunches and dinners according to the tour program
- Water 1 bottle per person every day
- Lunch, master class and wine tasting in a Georgian family
- Master class in Pasanauri
- Climbing Gergeti on SUVs