

EXPLORE!



BEST SELLER

Land of the Golden Fleece + Azerbaijan Extension
19 days

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia - Trip code GFA

Land of the Golden Fleece + Azerbaijan Extension

Journey through the Caucasus region of Central Asia and discover the diversity of a land straddling two continents, which formed part of the ancient Silk Road. We explore lively cities, walk through spectacular mountain scenery, sample the local tipples and learn about the history and culture of some of the most fascinating states of the former USSR.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Garni** - Walk into an impressive basalt gorge overlooked by a 1st century Hellenistic temple
- ★ **Lake Sevan** - Enjoy the sublime beauty of the largest lake in the Caucasus region
- ★ **Tbilisi** - Wander through the Old Town of Georgia's cosmopolitan capital
- ★ **Vardzia** - Discover a fascinating and remote 12th century cave city carved out of a cliff
- ★ **Kakheti** - Explore Georgia's wine region and enjoy a home-cooked lunch with a local family
- ★ **Baku** - Marvel at the contrasts of Azerbaijan's chaotic capital

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Yerevan

Arrive in Yerevan and check-in at the hotel. Passengers travelling on the group flight from London are not scheduled to arrive until the very early hours of the tomorrow morning. The capital of Armenia is a busy and cosmopolitan city, looking to the future but deeply rooted in its often tragic past. On a clear day there are splendid views across the Ararat Plain to the silhouette of Turkey's Mount Ararat (5165 m), the legendary resting place of Noah's Ark once part of 'Greater Armenia' and to many Armenians still symbolic of a glorious past. Find wide tree lined boulevards, grand 19th century buildings and several museums as well as many street side cafes perfect for sampling a strong Armenian coffee whilst people watching.



Accommodation: Minotel Barsam Suites (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available




Meals Provided: None


DAY 2 - From Yerevan visit the Holy City of Echmiadzin

This morning we head out of the city to visit the archaeological site of the 7th century ruins of the UNESCO listed Zvartnots, its remaining columns set against a magnificent backdrop of the snowy peaks of Mount Ararat. We continue on to Armenia's Holy City of Echmiadzin, the former capital, where we plan to visit the UNESCO listed Echmiadzin Cathedral in time to coincide with part of Sunday service. Returning to Yerevan, we pay a make our way to the Cascade complex - a Soviet period structure that resembles a giant stairway that houses a modern art museum. We continue on to see the expansive Republic Square before some time to enjoy a wander through the lively open air Vernisage craft market.



Accommodation: Minotel Barsam Suites (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available


 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 3 - From Yerevan visit sites of Garni and Geghard

Today we again leave the city behind as we drive east through small villages and a landscape of alpine meadows to out to the Hellenistic temple at Garni. This pagan monument dedicated to the worship of the sun was built in AD 77 and is an extraordinary sight to be found in Armenia, so far from the rest of the Hellenistic world. From the temple we take an easy walk down the Garni river gorge, where we can see the striking basalt rock formations that make up the towering walls of the gorge. We continue on to the nearby UNESCO listed Geghard Monastery found in a beautiful location surrounded by mountains. Partly made up of caves and partly built from local stone, this tranquil monastery dates from the 4th century and houses two main churches and a fountain of spring water alleged to have rejuvenating properties.



Accommodation: Minotel Barsam Suites (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 4 - From Yerevan visit Amberd Fortress

Today we head northwest and make an excursion to the imposing Amberd Fortress on the southern flank of Mount Aragats (4090 m). Its construction began in the 7th century and continued through into the 11th. The Fortress is surrounded by cliffs on three sides, which protected it for a long time until Tamerlane managed to sack it in the 14th century. Afterward we head towards Oshakan village, where a local family invite us into their home to see how they bake traditional Armenian flatbread known as 'Lovash'. We then enjoy a lunch prepared with this freshly baked bread, before returning to the city. Back in Yerevan we have time to visit the remarkable Matenadaran library, which houses over 17,000 rare manuscripts.



Accommodation: Minotel Barsam Suites (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 5 - Drive to Lake Sevan via monasteries and winery

We depart Yerevan today and travel south through the vast plains of Ararat to visit Khor Virap Monastery. Mount Ararat is a constant companion on the horizon and provides a spectacular backdrop to the monastery. As we continue on our way the plains give way to undulating hills as we start making our way into the mountains. We pass through the wine-making village of Areni where

we stop at a local winery to taste the best wine in Armenia. Continuing on our way, the scenery becomes more mountainous and we head into a spectacular gorge where we make a stop at the picturesque Noravank Monastery, taking pride of place in a lofty position overlooking the gorge below.

After a break here for lunch we climb higher making our way over Selim Pass (2410 m) providing wonderful views of the mountains and Alpine meadows with its many wild flowers in the spring. As Selim Pass was once part of the Silk Road we find can the remains of a caravanserai here, where travellers would find food and shelter on their journey. The road then starts a descent and once again we start to pass through villages, eventually catching our first glimpse of the expansive waters of the beautiful Lake Sevan with its backdrop of mountain peaks. Located 1900 m above sea level Lake Sevan is famous for its ever changing hues, and depending on the weather the colour of the water can range from a deep steely blue to a stunning turquoise. This huge body of water is the largest lake in the Caucasus region covering an area of 940 square km, and one of the largest fresh water high altitude lakes in the world. We have the chance to walk up to Sevanavank Monastery, where, from its high position we gain a different perspective of the lake. Our hotel for the night sits on the banks of the lake itself.



Accommodation: Blue Sevan (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Drive to Tbilisi via Monastery of Haghpat

Today we head to the Armenia/Georgia border at Sadakhlo. The scenery changes again as we find ourselves amongst hills and valleys covered in pine trees. In picturesque Dilijan town, we walk through a museum street, which has preserved houses dating back to the 18th century with typical fretwork wooden balconies as well as local handicraft studios. As we continue on the scenery changes again and becomes more dramatic as we drive by towering escarpments as we make our way into the copper mining are of Armenia. Our final stop is at the dramatically located Monastery of Haghpat, listed by UNESCO on account of its outstanding ecclesiastical architecture. Crossing the border in the afternoon, we cross a river to arrive in Georgia and continue to the capital of Tbilisi. Time permitting, there may be the opportunity to take a stroll up to the Narikala Citadel for fine views over the city or take a relaxing sulphur bath for which Tbilisi is famous.



Accommodation: Hotel KMM (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - In Tbilisi, walking tour of Old Town; free afternoon

The capital of Georgia is an ancient and cosmopolitan city; we can find a synagogue, a mosque, a Georgian basilica, an Armenian church and a Zoroastrian Fire-Worshipper's temple all within a 15 minute walk of one another. Tbilisi is one of Europe's most fascinating capitals, and we include a half day orientation tour on foot which takes us first through the picturesque Old Town to the important Church of Metecki, the Sioni Cathedral and then on to the fascinating State Museum. There is plenty of time free to

explore the city further, perhaps a backstage tour of the Rustaveli Theatre or a wander through the narrow streets of the Old Town perhaps finding a quirky café to pass the time. A walk over the architecturally striking contemporary Peace Bridge is also a must.



Accommodation: Hotel KMM (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive via Mtskheta to Kutaisi via Uplistsikhe cave town

Leaving the capital this morning, we drive to picturesque Mtskheta, the spiritual heart of Georgia. Here we visit the hilltop 6th century Jvari Monastery. From here we have spectacular views of Mtskheta and the confluence of two rivers below. We make our way down into the town where we visit Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The 11th century basilica contains the grave of Sidonia, who was said to have been buried holding Christ's robe. From here we drive through villages to the cave town of Uplistsikhe. Here an entire town of streets, churches, palaces and residential buildings has been carved into the mountainside. Dating from the first millennium BC, it gradually grew to be an important city on the trade route linking Byzantium with India and China. After exploring this unusual place we drive via Khashuri and Surami into the hills towards the Rikoti Pass, claimed to be a watershed between Asia and Europe. Here the road winds through narrow, forested valleys before dropping onto the fertile plains of the Rioni, Georgia's most important river. Arriving in Kutaisi, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Colchis, we check into our guesthouse for a two-night stay. Kutaisi has always been an important town throughout the ages and for many years was the capital of Georgia, when the Arabs occupied Tbilisi. The period between the reigns of King Bagrat and Queen Tamar (roughly 900 - 1200) was the golden age for Kutaisi and most of the significant buildings date from this time. Now it is the main city of the Imereti region and here the people are renowned for their sense of humour and also a special kind of 'khachapuri' - the cheese bread unique to Georgia.



Accommodation: Natela's Guesthouse 'Beqa' (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 9 - From Kutaisi visit Gelati Monastery; free afternoon

This morning we drive to the magnificent UNESCO listed monastery complex at Gelati, which includes an Academy that employed some of Georgia's greatest thinkers. It was founded in 1106 by King David the Builder in gratitude to God for his victories over the Turks. The King wanted it to serve as a centre of Christendom, so as well as scholars many religious artists studied here. Many of the treasures which were made here have been lost over the centuries, however the buildings and frescos in them are extremely well preserved, and the setting of the monastery on a hillside with views over to the distant Caucasus peaks is attractive. Later we drive to the smaller monastery of Motsameta, spectacularly sited on a cliff-edge on the horse-shoe bend of a river, before taking a detour to a nearby area unique in Georgia for its underground caves. We explore one of the grottoes before heading back to our guesthouse in Kutaisi. During free time this afternoon, it is possible to walk from our guesthouse through the attractive back streets to the turquoise roofed Bagrati Cathedral for great views over Kutaisi or walk down into town to explore the back streets and riverfront observing local life.



Accommodation: Natela's Guesthouse 'Beqa' (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 10 - Drive to Akhaltsikhe through Borjomi Gorge

Our journey today begins by retracing our route back to Khashuri before turning south to drop into the majestic deciduous forests of the Borjomi Gorge. Our destination today will be Akhaltsikhe, a charming town which translates literally to 'new city', although ironically there isn't much that's new about this 12th century town. The skyline is dominated by the imposing Rabati castle, its old streets are home to a large Armenian population, and the forests just outside the town hide the beautiful 10th century Saphara Monastery. We have some free time late this afternoon to explore Akhaltsikhe.



Accommodation: Lomsia Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 11 - From Akhaltsikhe; explore cave town of Vardzia

Today we head towards one of Georgia's most significant sites, the cave town of Vardzia. On route we'll stop off at Khertvisi Fortress, dramatically situated on a cliff above the confluence of two major rivers, it is one of the oldest fortresses in Georgia dating back to the 2nd Century BC. We'll continue our drive through a remote and beautiful landscape of rolling hills, with mountain peaks on the horizon and pine trees occasionally standing like sentries along the sides of the road. Vardzia itself is cut into a towering cliff and was Established by King Giorgi III in the 12th century, as a stronghold against the Turkish Sultanate (the Turkish border is only 10km away). Vardzia was subsequently developed by his daughter, Tamar (later to become Queen Tamar), who created a cave monastery that became a centre of Georgian culture. This network of caves above the Mtkvari (Kura) river once numbered 3000, with up to 19 tiers in some places. Much of it was destroyed after a huge earthquake in 1456 and only 550 caves have been since discovered. There are numerous churches, meeting halls, refectories and wine cellars, all interconnected by tunnels and stairways. We have time to explore and navigate our way around this fascinating place before returning to Akhaltsikhe.



Accommodation: Lomsia Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 12 - Drive to Gudauri via Stalin's museum in Gori

We continue our journey, stopping at the very Soviet style town of Gori, where Georgia's most famous son, Stalin, was born. Here we visit the museum and learn much about his life. Interestingly he initially began training as a priest in the Georgian Seminary, before abandoning religion to become a brigand and join the new Bolshevik movement. It has been suggested too that Georgia escaped the worst horrors of Stalin's regime because he was afraid of his conservative Christian mother! En route we'll pay a visit to the Ananuri Fortress overlooking a reservoir on the Aragvi River. We continue to head north into the mountains. The scenery becomes more dramatic as we ascend along the Georgian Military Highway. We drive through the spectacular and breathtaking mountain scenery of the Greater Caucasus as we make our way to Gudauri (2196 m), a winter ski resort overlooking an epic gorge, for a two-night stay.



Accommodation: Hotel Gudauri Hut (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 13 - From Gudauri; walk in Kazbegi Mountains

North of Gudauri, the Kazbegi region is a picturesque area, with alpine meadows and towering snow-capped mountains. We spend the day in the mountains and plan to walk from Kazbegi town through Gergeti village and up to the Church of the Holy Trinity, stunningly located on a hilltop overlooking the snowy peaks of the Caucasus Mountains. The walk is a round trip of 3-4 hours. The area is a treasure trove of mythology - it was to the majestic Mount Kazbegi (5047 m), the highest peak in this region, that Prometheus was chained. This part of the Caucasus is a protected area, and is home to a variety of flora and fauna. Georgia has over 100 different mammals, and although the European bison and Caucasian leopard have become extinct, there are still wolves and bears in the mountains.



Accommodation: Hotel Gudauri Hut (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 14 - Drive to Telavi via Tbilisi and Kakheti wine region

We descend from the mountains today and find ourselves again on the plains as we drive back to Tbilisi where we stop for lunch and have some free time. In the afternoon we continue west to the Kakheti region where we first make a stop at the lovely 18th century town of Signaghi, referred to locally and tongue-in-cheek as the Paris of Georgia! The Kakheti region is famous for its wine production we visit to a local winery that has been operating for over 300 years. Here we can see a 16th century wine cellar and have the chance to sample both red and white wines before continuing to the charming town of Telavi where we overnight in a guesthouse with shared facilities.



Accommodation: Rusiko's Guesthouse (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 15 - Visit farmers' market and wine factory, then drive to Sheki

This morning we visit the farmers market in Telavi. After seeing all of the produce we travel to a wine factory for a fascinating insight into how the local tiddle is created. We will see both European style production and traditional Georgian production methods. We will also be able to sample the wines and perhaps buy a bottle of Hilary Clinton's favourite. Our al fresco lunch is hosted by a local family at their home. We have the unique opportunity to experience delicious traditional Georgian cooking and hospitality. We will also have time to visit the impressive 16th century Gremi Fortress. In the afternoon passengers returning to Tbilisi will be picked up and taken back to the city for their final night. Those heading on to Azerbaijan will cross the border at Lagodekhi and drive on to Sheki.



Accommodation: Sheki Palace Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 16 - In Sheki, walking tour; visit Kish village church

Lost in the folds of the forested slopes of the Caucasus foothills, Sheki has for centuries been an important market town on the east west trading route running across the Caucasus from the Caspian Sea in the east to the Black Sea in the west. A further trade route across the mountains to Dagestan in the north turned Sheki into a thriving commercial centre - especially during the 18th and 19th centuries, when there were no fewer than five working caravanserais providing safe lodging to merchants and traders. We visit the Palace complex including the museum. In the afternoon we visit the nearby village of Kish, where we can visit the village church, and learn how the traditional 'Kelagai' headscarfs are still made by hand when at the local workshop



Accommodation: Sheki Palace Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 17 - Drive to Baku via Samaxi

We travel the historic trade route from Sheki to Baku, on the Caspian Sea, a scenic if winding journey in the shadow of the mighty Caucasus stopping en route at Samaxi where we visit the second oldest mosque in the trans-Caucasus. We also plan to stop in Shemakha where we witness the making Qatiq, a traditional yoghurt drink and a staple of Turkic countries.

On our drive the land is incredibly varied: from lifeless deserts at one extreme to dense green forests at the other.



Accommodation: Sapphire Inn Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 18 - In Baku, walking tour; visit Absheron peninsula

The history of Baku is long and fascinating, not least its recent past since the 'oil boom' of the early 20th century, when Azerbaijan produced more than half the world's supply of oil and the capital Baku grew uncontrollably. On our first morning however we walk through the delightful winding alleys of the Old City, whose old mosques, caravanserais and overhanging wooden balconies tell of a quieter era in Baku's history. We see the Maiden's Tower, a powerful, eight-storey fortress, and the Shirvanshah's Palace complex, parts of which date back to the 15th century. In the afternoon we make a trip by bus to the Absheron peninsula, to visit its remarkable Zoroastrian Atesgah (fire temple).



Accommodation: Sapphire Inn Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 19 - Tour ends in Baku

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast. Passengers returning to London on the group flight to London depart in the very early morning before breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



2018 itinerary



2019 itinerary

Why book this trip

This tour takes in three of the states of the former USSR and showcases the history, culture and stunning mountain landscapes of the region. Located along part of the Silk Road in the Caucasus region, Armenia and Georgia straddle Europe and Asia but feel very eastern European, a testament to their Soviet past, while Azerbaijan has a more classic Central Asian feel. Our extension to Azerbaijan is the perfect excuse to sample this little visited country.

What's included?



Included meals

- Breakfast: 18
- Lunch: 5
- Dinner: 8



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

- Explore Tour Leader
- Driver(s)
- Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

- 3 nights simple guesthouse
- 19 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Armenia

Climate

Due to the fact that Armenia is on a high landlocked plateau the temperature extremes are pronounced: winters are cold and summers can be very hot, spring and autumn are widely regarded as the best times to visit.

Time difference to GMT

+4

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Christian

Language

Armenian

Azerbaijan

Climate

Azerbaijan experiences extremes of climate: while Baku and the Caspian coastal areas are hot and humid in mid-summer, May to September are the best months to visit the mountainous north-west.

Time difference to GMT

+4

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Islam

Language

Azerbaijani

Georgia

Climate

Georgia has a temperate climate with warm dry periods from June to September. Early and late in the season, temperatures can drop to sub-zero at higher altitude.

Time difference to GMT

+4

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Christian

Language

Georgian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Mtskheta - Visit pagan ruins at Bagineti archaeological site: US\$ 5pp

Tbilisi - Rustaveli Theatre (Day 7) minimum pax 5: US\$ 5 pp

Batumi - Full day excursion to the Black Sea coast (Day 9) minimum of 15 required: US\$ 30pp [If this takes place Day 9's sightseeing may be moved to the morning of day 10]

Clothing

Weather is changeable in the north and mountains; it can be cool especially at night, bring a warmer jacket. Raingear is essential at all times. In remote parts of Armenia and Georgia and Azerbaijan you should avoid shorts and vest tops; long trousers or skirts are ideal. A headscarf is essential for visiting churches and mosques.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes for visiting sites and hilly towns; sandals; lightweight walking/trail boots for optional day walks.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

If you are planning on taking any prescription medications with you on tour it is recommended that you also carry a prescription issued by your doctor.

Equipment

A waterbottle, torch, swimsuit, sunhat, suncream and sunglasses.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

In this region, tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this your Explore Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour.

The following amounts will be collected in each country towards the kitty

Armenia - £10 per person
Georgia - £20 per person
Azerbaijan - £10 per person

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Country Information

Armenia

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£6

Dinner price

£12.00 - 16.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£0.50 - 1.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Dram.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend you take your money in undamaged mixed denomination US\$ notes issued post 1993.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Only in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very limited.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are difficult to change.

Azerbaijan

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£12.00 - 16.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£0.50 - 1.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Manat.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend you take your money in undamaged mixed denomination US\$ notes issued post 1993.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Only in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very limited.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are difficult to change

Georgia

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£5

Dinner price

£7

Beer price

£1.00 - 3.00

Water price

£0.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Lari.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend you take your money in undamaged mixed denomination US\$ notes issued post 1993.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Only in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very limited.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are difficult to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Armenia: Visas are not required for EU nationals, US & UK citizens.

Georgia: Visas are not required for EU nationals, UK, Canadian or US citizens.

Azerbaijan: All nationalities will require a visa prior to arrival. British passport holders are eligible to apply for an e-visa from <https://evisa.gov.az/en/> which takes approximately 3 working days to process. Applicants should have access to an email account and at least 6 months validity on your passport.

All other nationalities should confirm visa arrangements with the relevant embassy.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Armenia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider.

Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Azerbaijan

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider.

Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Georgia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
