

IN SEARCH OF RARE BIRDS

Georgia

Together with ornithologists observe unique breeds of birds

In Georgia there are approximately 350 bird species, of which over 250 different species are breeders. Georgia lies across a migration corridor between the Black and Caspian Seas, which makes its ornitho-fauna exceptionally diverse. Our Birdwatching itineraries are expedition style tours, managed and logistically supported by Caucasus Travel, guided by professional ornithologists, if required. Before offering the program, we look carefully into our guests' particular interests. The diverse landscape of the country offers a unique opportunity to observe different species in semi-desert, savanna-like landscapes, flood-plain forests, alpine meadows, glaciers and wetlands.

Day 1: **Arrival in Tbilisi;** met and assisted at the airport.

Day 2: **Tbilisi sightseeing tour;**

Day 3: **Tbilisi - Mtskheta - Stepantsminda;** drive north towards the high peaks of the Caucasus Mountain range. En route short stop at Jvari church to give a look at Mtskheta UNESCO site. During the other stops we have chances to see wetland birds including White-winged Black and Gull billed Terns. At some of the oak and beech woods covering the lower slopes, Green Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher and perhaps Semi collared Flycatcher can be seen.

Day 4: **Stepantsminda;** spend a day around Stepantsminda and enjoy first encounter with mountain birds as Twite, Shore Lark of the penicillate race and White-winged Snowfinch feeding alongside the road. We might see our first raptors such as Griffon Vulture, Peregrine and the mighty Lammergeier. Higher on slopes there are more chances to spot Levant Sparrowhawk, Caucasian Snowcock, ecc.

Day 5: **Stepantsminda;** walk to Gergeti Trinity church beautifully located in a shadow of mount Kazbek 5054m. In high alpine meadows Caucasian Black Grouse, and in rocky parts Guldenstadt's Redstart and Great Rosefinch can be found.

Day 6: **Stepantsminda - Gori;** spend morning in Stepantsminda surroundings, where such beautiful birds as Mountain Chiffchaff, Green Warbler and a variety of migrants, including European Bee-eater, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes, Red-throated Pipit, Yellow Wagtail and Ortolan Bunting can be noticed. In the afternoon drive to Mtskheta. En route visit Ananuri Architectural complex.

Day 7: **Gori - Uplistsikhe- Akhaltsikhe-Vardzia;** from Tbilisi drive to Akhaltsikhe cave town via Gori. Visit Uplistsikhe cave town, dating back to the first millennium BC. In Akhaltsikhe give a look to Rabati fortress.

Day 8: **Vardzia Cave town and the Mtkvari River valley;** visit Vardzia Cave town of Georgian Golden age, transformed into a well defended monastery complex. The area has a number of typical east-Mediterranean species. It is possible to observe; Griffon, Egyptian and bearded vultures, golden eagle, sort-toed snake eagle, and long-legged buzzard are a common sight. Other birds of prey are Levant sparrowhawk and peregrine falcon. In Vardzia surroundings chukars are relatively common. Other birds are European bee-eater and hoopoe, crag martin, black-eared wheatear, blue rock thrush, orphean warbler, lesser whitethroat, rock nuthatch, lesser grey shrike, rose-coloured starling, rock sparrow, black-headed and ortolan buntings and other songbirds typical for semiarid landscapes.

Day 9: **Day trip to Khanchali Lake;** the area gives an opportunity to trace corncrake, marsh and Montague's harriers, common crane, Dalmatian and white pelicans, red-necked and black-necked grebes, white stork, squacco heron, great white egret, Eurasian spoonbill, glossy ibis marsh and terek sandpipers, more species of waders, gulls, and terns like great black-headed gulls, gull-billed terns, and white-winged black terns. Hikers climbing up the volcanic mountains of Javakheti will be rewarded with encounters of more birds. Local villages are the most important nesting sites of white stork in the Caucasus.



BEST SEASON FOR THE TOUR BY MONTH

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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TOUR TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Touring Distance ≈ 1420 km	Total driving time ≈ 29 hours		
Longest driving distance per day ≈ 275 km	Longest driving time per day ≈ 5,5 hours		
O/N by locations: 2+3+1+3+2 = 11 Nights	Walking total ≈ 25 hours		
Adopted conditions for disabled person*	No	Partly	Fully

* Caucasus Travel takes special care of disabled persons, doing the best to adapt and improve conditions for disabled persons, when/where it is possible



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Day 10: **Vardzia-Tbilisi via picturesque Javakheti Plateau;** venture across mountain grassland areas. The lakes and their surroundings support breeding populations of many bird species. This site gives a great opportunity to enjoy observing velvet scoter, ruddy shelduck, ferruginous duck, and many other duck species. During the spring migration there is big chance to see White-Headed Duck, White tailed Plover and Sociable Plover.

Day 11: **Day trip to David Gareja;** explore David Gareja semi desert, with ancient stone carved monasteries and colourful clay hills covered with shrub and steppe- like vegetation. In Davit Gareji can be seen breeding colonies of Eurasian griffon and Egyptian vultures, breeding imperial eagles, chukar, roller, hoopoe, blue rock thrush; large aggregations of bee-eaters, rose-coloured starling, and rock dove. Other attractions for birdwatchers are long-legged buzzard, common kestrel, cine-reous vulture, Eurasian sparrowhawk, short-toed snake eagle, and saker falcon. Passerines: calandra lark, crag martin, rufous tailed scrub robin, isabelline wheatear, finsch's wheatear, pied wheatear, willow warbler, orphean warbler, lesser whitethroat, rock nuthatch, lesser grey shrike, woodchat shrike, Spanish sparrow, rock sparrow, black-headed bunting, ortolan bunting.

Day 12: **Departure;** transfer to the airport.

Spring season's tour covers highlands of Caucasus and surroundings of mount Kazbek, Chachuna managed nature reserve, which comprises of steppes and savannah - like landscapes, arid woodlands and semi - deserts, grassland areas and volcanic mountains of Javakheti plateau and Khanchali Lake.

Caucasian Black Grouse (Tetrao Mlokosiewiczzi), Great Rosefinch (Carpodacus rubicilla), Caucasian Snow cock (Tetraogallus caucasicus), Egyptian Vultures (Neophron Percnopterus), Gldenstdt's (or White-winged), Mountain Chfifchaff (Phylloscopus Lorenzii), Stone Curlew (Burchinus oedicnemus), European Bee-eater (Merops Apiaster), Black Francolin (Francolinus francolinus), European Roller (Coracias garrulus), Lesser Grey Shrike (Lanius minor), Little Owl (Athene noctule), Syrian Woodpecker (Dendrocopos syriacus), Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis), Common Quail (Coturnix Coturnix), Calandra Lark (Melanocorypha calandra), Black-Headed Bunting (Emberiza melanocephala), Common Stonechat (Saxicola Rubicola), Ruddy Shelduck (Tadorna ferruginea), Black Stork (Ciconia Nigra), Redstart (Phoenicurus erythrogastrus), Bearded vulture (Gypaetus barbatus)

The autumn program is designated to trace the raptor migration in highlands of Black Sea shore. The program covers subtropical highlands of Adjara and Chorokhi River Valley, Zekari and Goderzi Mountain Passes, as well as grassed steep, volcanic mountains and lakes of Javakheti plateau.

Black kite (Milvus migrans), European honey buzzard (Pernis apivorus), Montagu's harriers (Circus Pygargus), Pallid Harriers (Circus Macrorous), Western marsh harriers (Circus aeruginosus), Levant Sparrowhawks (Accipiter brevipes), Merlin (Falco culumbarius), Northern Goshawks (Accipiter gentilis), Velvet Scoter (Melanitta fusca), Imperial Eagles (Aquila Hellaca), Lesser Spotted Eagles (Aquila Pomarina), Ruddy Shelduck (Tadorna ferruginea), Caucasian Snowcock (Tetraogallus Caucasicus), White Pelicans (Pelecanus Onocrotalus), Dalmatian Pelicans (Pelecanus Crispus), Long-legged Buzzards (Buteo Rufinus), White-Headed Duck (Oxyura leucocephala), Ferruginous duck (Aythya nyroca), Red-necked Grebe (Podiceps grise-gena), Black-necked Grebe (Podiceps nigricollis), Squacco heron (Ardeola ralloides), Eurasian spoonbill (Platalea leucorodia), Glossy ibis (Plegadis falcinellus), Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ribidundus), Eurasian sparrowhawk (Accipiter nisus), Eurasian hobby (Falco subbuteo), Glossy ibis (Plegadis falcinellus), Great egret (Ardea alba), Terek sandpiper (Xenus cinereus), Marsh sandpiper (Tringa stagnatilis), Gull-billed Tern (Gelocheledon nilotica), White-winged black Tern (Chlidonias leucoptera), Common kestrel (Falco tinnunculus), Red-footed falcon (Falco vespertinus), Short-toed snake eagle (Circaetus gallicus), Greater spotted eagle (clanga clanga), Steppe eagle (Aquila nipalensis), Booted eagle (Aquila pennata), White-tailed eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla), Rough-legged buzzard (Buteo lagopus), Golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos), Crimson-winged Finches (Rhodopechys Sanguinea), Caucasian Black Grouse (Tetrao Mlokosiewiczzi), Little Bustards (Tetrax tetrax), Bearded vulture (Gypaetus barbatus), Gldenstdt's Redstart (Phoenicurus erythrogastrus), Krper's nuthatch (Sitta krueperi), Tawny owl (Strix aluco), Wood pigeon (Columba palumbus), Eurasian wren (Troglodytes troglodytes), Ortolan bunting (Emberiza hortulana), etc.



Purpose of this PDF is to give you general information about provided program.

As always, we design and tailor tours to ensure that they are perfect fit for our customers.

Please contact us to design tailored tour for you.

Program details, including transportation, accommodation, catering, events, and experiences, will be shared upon completing the request form and through ongoing communication to tailor to visitors' specific needs and wishes.



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About the Programs, Services and More...

The Sample Programs shown on this site, are based on customers frequent requests and points of interests, however as usual, we design and tailor tours for our customers to meet their best interests.

Provided programs give an opportunity to travel and enjoy the hospitality of the Caucasus Countries; experience traditions of these countries, geographically so close to each other but still so different; taste local cuisine and get in touch with local people; get acquainted with their life-style, visit museums, important architectural monuments and enjoy diversity of the landscapes by visiting lowlands and the Caucasus Mountains.

Even though programs are mainly focused on excursions and cultural experiences some elements of active leisure can be organically incorporated in the program without much changes. Opportunities of short hiking, early morning short biking or horse riding, ballooning, etc., are very common and desired options for visitors.

Sightseeing - Our programs are combinations of the most interesting and thematically different visits to cultural, architectural, historical, archaeological sites, museums, galleries, nature sites and National Parks; at most sites brief written information is given in English and guided tours are available in English and other European languages. In places where local guides are not available or do not speak the language requested by our guests Caucasus Travel guides are there to assist with guiding and translation.

Experience - Along the cultural programs we offer unique experiences: meet locals, enjoy craft workshops, culinary master classes, thematic meetings. Book events and receptions in the most unexpected places, meet outstanding interesting people, speakers, artists, experts.

Enjoy short and easy hiking in some programs, also use an opportunity to book horseback, white water easy rafting & other activities or relaxing boat tours and ballooning opening fascinating views.

Travel from country to country and create your own unforgettable memories.

Supply & Network - We are strengthened by professional, reliable, loyal suppliers and partners in cities and rural areas of Georgia and the Caucasus. One can guess, that during years of mutually successful business and sincere relationship, we have earned huge network of partnership in accommodation, catering, transportation or in any needed field of supply. This is our wealth and the strongest point.

Accommodation - In all three countries we have a wide choice of international and local hotels offering high standard hospitality services. We couple the tradition with the comfort. Our visitors choosing accommodation places from big variety of properties, from beautiful Guest Houses to Superior Hotels. Providing hotels of all categories, we are working with best of them and having great deals for our customers.

Food & Catering - We serve our guests in the best local restaurants, providing big variety of National and European food. There are also many Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Thai and other exotic food restaurants available in all three countries. When and where it is needed we provide picnic, snacks, fruits, drinks, and of course unlimited bottled water while transportation.

Transportation - Depending on group size we provide appropriate types of comfortable vehicles: for large groups medium or full size busses (30-45 seats); for smaller groups minibuses (15 seats) and minivans; for individual travellers we offer sedan type cars or SUV. Vehicles will usually be changed while crossing land borders between the countries, as well as drivers, to guarantee local expertise.

Professional Staff with "Field Experience" - Company Managers and staff have had special training in tourism management in various leading institutions of Europe, USA and Japan. Caucasus Travel employs and contracts people with diverse professional backgrounds. This enables us competently and successfully plan, design and carry various tours in many fields of interest: archaeology, history, culture, art, ethnology, etc.

Guides - In each country we employ top professional, well-trained and experienced guides. Having wide knowledge and interests, they are very enthusiastic to show the best of the country, its life, moderate communication with locals and always will be glad to assist guests best interest.

Languages - Our managers, office staff, guides are fluent in 3-4 languages. We speak and guiding tours in English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Korean languages.

How to get there...

Flights - Direct flights to Tbilisi, Yerevan, Baku also Kutaisi and Batumi are available from the main European and Asian cities. Flights are operated by: Lufthansa, Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, Air France, Condor, LOT, Air Baltic, Wizz Air, FlyDubai, Eurowings, Pegasus, Air Arabia, many more.., and of course Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani national carriers.

Visa is not required for Georgia for the citizens of the USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Israel, Turkey, citizens of EU member countries and CIS - full list is available on www.mfa.gov.ge. Those, who require visa for Georgia will be able to obtain e-visa through www.evisa.gov.ge.

Please find information about visa requirements in Armenia on www.mfa.am. Visa can be obtained at Armenian border upon arrival. The citizens of some countries need invitation letter in order to get visa at the consulate of Armenia in their country of residence. The list of the countries can be found on www.mfa.am.

Visa for Azerbaijan has to be arranged before arrival. You can find information about visa requirements on www.mfa.gov.az. Please note, that e-visa for Azerbaijan can be provided by Caucasus Travel and on supplementary basis.

Passport must be valid for at least six months (required for all three countries).

Please contact us for questions or enquiries...

We are open for collaboration and keen to develop new product and projects to satisfy the most demanding customers. Having decades of experience in operating in South Caucasus, we have hosted travellers from many countries and nationalities, gaining great understanding of their cultural, practical customs and expectations.

We carefully select the product and all its components. We participate in all the steps in the product development - from generating ideas to designing logistical schemes of day-to-day operations. We constantly monitor and control our suppliers (hotels, restaurants, transportation, etc.). When developing a product, should this be for individuals or groups, we consider four major parameters: content, safety, quality and price. Of course, final shape of the product is defined according to the priorities settled by the customer.

So, welcome to South Caucasus - have a great Cultural Experience and Lifelong Impression.

CAUCASUS TRAVEL

The first choice Tour Operator and DMC in South Caucasus