

The image shows the interior of a historic stone building, likely a church or monastery. It features a series of large, pointed arches supported by thick, cylindrical stone columns. The walls and floor are made of rough-hewn stone. In the center, a doorway is brightly lit from within, casting a warm orange glow. To the right of the doorway, there is a large, glowing orange light source, possibly a fire or a large lamp, which illuminates the surrounding stone walls. The overall atmosphere is dark and ancient, with the light highlighting the textures of the stone and the architectural details.

Cultural Discovery and Photography Tours with NURAN ZORLU

GEORGIA and ARMENIA



1st to 22th OCT 2027

**Road trip through Caucasus mountains,
vibrant cities, nature walks and sleepy
villages in Autumn**

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Georgia and Armenia Road Trip, Caucasus Mountains in Autumn

Embark on a unique and enriching photography holiday with Nuran Zorlu, a seasoned traveler, philosophy and sociology graduate with a passion for both exploration and capturing moments through the lens. This journey promises not only to unveil the oldest cultural artefacts and breathtaking landscapes but also to immerse you in vibrant local life and tantalise your taste buds with delectable cuisine.

Nuran Zorlu, a skilled cook in addition to being a skilled photographer, has delved into the hidden corners of Armenia and Georgia, exploring places often overlooked by typical tour brochures. His tours are not just about snapping stunning photographs; they are an opportunity to enhance your photography skills while delving into the rich cultural tapestry of the region.

As an educator in photography and lecturer in the region's history, Nuran attracts a diverse group of participants, including photographers and individuals fascinated by other cultures. His tours are designed to provide not only a fantastic cultural experience but also a chance to learn and grow through the lens of a camera.

Having visited the region long before it became a tourist hotspot, Nuran's vast local knowledge adds a unique dimension to the cultural discovery tour. With Armenian heritage and fluency in the language, he is culturally connected to the area, offering participants an insider's perspective on Armenia and Georgia.

Armenia and Georgia, the pioneers in accepting the Christian faith, boast ancient churches and cathedrals dating back to the 5th century CE. Both countries share a complex history as part of the Soviet Union, and while more than 30 years have passed since the fall of the Soviet era, remnants of that period linger in the region.

Join Nuran on this expedition to witness architectural marvels, savour delicious cuisines, and behold breathtaking landscapes in places rarely visited by tourists. Capture moments through your lens and enhance your photography skills under the guidance of one of Australia's foremost travel photographers. This trip promises to create memories etched forever in your mind, offering a truly immersive and unforgettable experience in the heart of Armenia and Georgia.



Trip Notes

Day 1-2: Tbilisi (B)

Our journey begins at Tbilisi International Airport. A brief 30-minute ride transports us to our hotel nestled in the historical center of Tbilisi. The first day is dedicated to acclimatization and rest, with an optional opportunity for those with energy to explore the enchanting streets of Tbilisi, showcasing the city's unique blend of history and modernity.

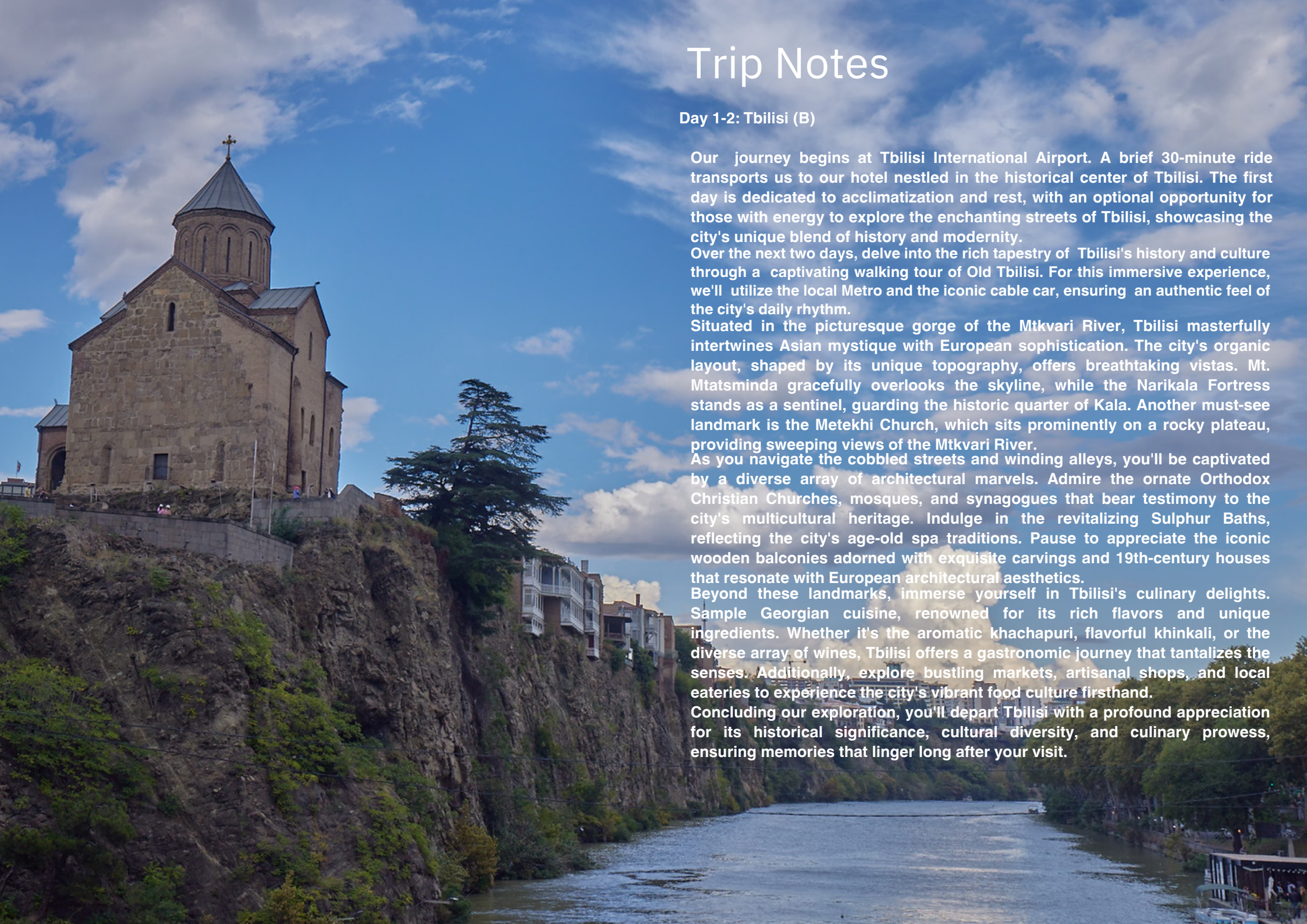
Over the next two days, delve into the rich tapestry of Tbilisi's history and culture through a captivating walking tour of Old Tbilisi. For this immersive experience, we'll utilize the local Metro and the iconic cable car, ensuring an authentic feel of the city's daily rhythm.

Situated in the picturesque gorge of the Mtkvari River, Tbilisi masterfully intertwines Asian mystique with European sophistication. The city's organic layout, shaped by its unique topography, offers breathtaking vistas. Mt. Mtatsminda gracefully overlooks the skyline, while the Narikala Fortress stands as a sentinel, guarding the historic quarter of Kala. Another must-see landmark is the Metekhi Church, which sits prominently on a rocky plateau, providing sweeping views of the Mtkvari River.

As you navigate the cobbled streets and winding alleys, you'll be captivated by a diverse array of architectural marvels. Admire the ornate Orthodox Christian Churches, mosques, and synagogues that bear testimony to the city's multicultural heritage. Indulge in the revitalizing Sulphur Baths, reflecting the city's age-old spa traditions. Pause to appreciate the iconic wooden balconies adorned with exquisite carvings and 19th-century houses that resonate with European architectural aesthetics.

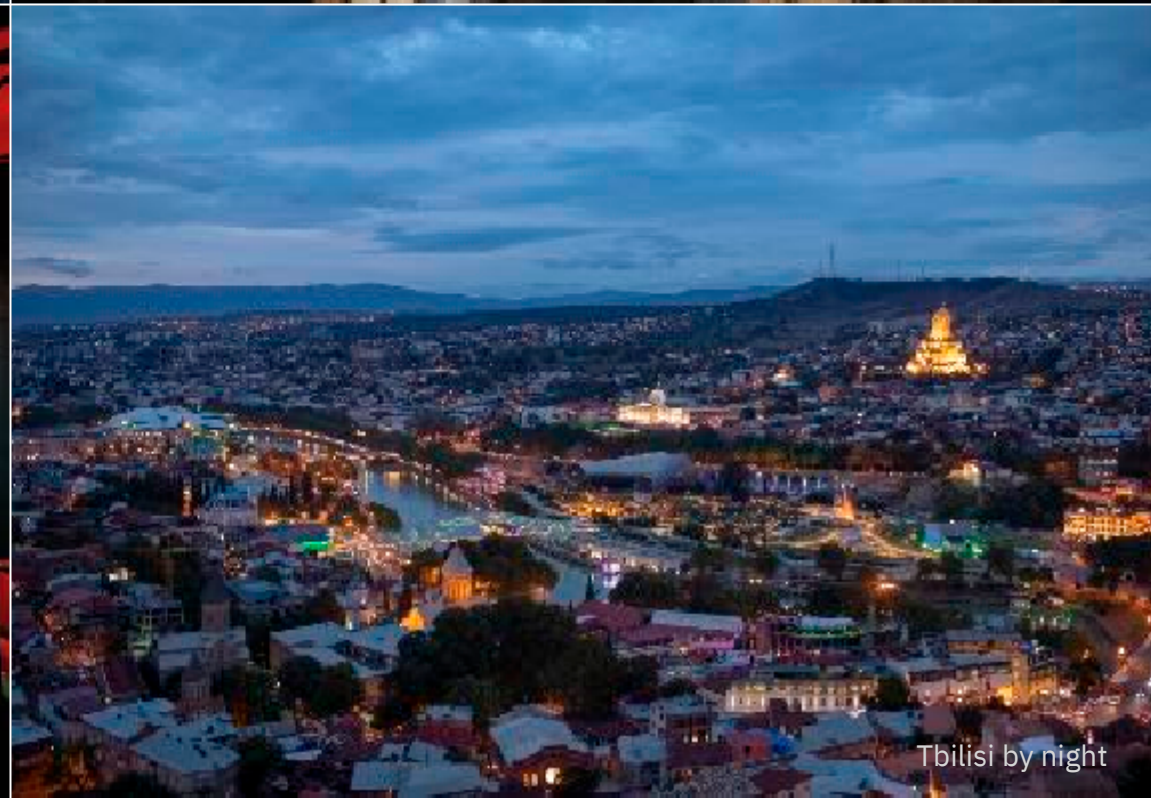
Beyond these landmarks, immerse yourself in Tbilisi's culinary delights. Sample Georgian cuisine, renowned for its rich flavors and unique ingredients. Whether it's the aromatic khachapuri, flavorful khinkali, or the diverse array of wines, Tbilisi offers a gastronomic journey that tantalizes the senses. Additionally, explore bustling markets, artisanal shops, and local eateries to experience the city's vibrant food culture firsthand.

Concluding our exploration, you'll depart Tbilisi with a profound appreciation for its historical significance, cultural diversity, and culinary prowess, ensuring memories that linger long after your visit.





Art Nouveau Tbilisi



Day 3-4 Dilijan - Autumn Forest experience (B,D)

Today, our journey leads us into Armenia. After a hearty breakfast, a 90-minute drive takes us to the Sadakhlo border crossing. Upon crossing into Armenia, our ground crew guides us to Dilijan, often dubbed the 'Armenian Switzerland' for its lush landscapes.

But first we traverse picturesque mountain ranges, each bend revealing breathtaking vistas, as we make our way to Haghpat. Situated amidst lush landscapes,

Haghpat Monastery is renowned for its architectural significance and cultural importance. Alongside its sister site, Sanahin (both Unesco heritage sites) Haghpat and Sanahin stands as a testament to Armenia's rich heritage and artistic achievements, with intricate stone carvings, historic chapels, and a serene ambiance that captivates visitors.

Dilijan welcomes us with its historic churches, intricate carvings, and stories of Armenia's rich heritage. While here, we'll explore the renowned Haghartsin Monastery, nestled amidst dense forests, showcasing Armenian architectural marvels and spiritual significance.

Additionally, our visit includes the picturesque Goshavank Monastery, known for its medieval architecture and cultural importance. These monasteries offer glimpses into Armenia's past and spiritual essence.

As we wander Dilijan's cobblestone streets, the town's laid-back vibe becomes evident, complemented by charming cafes and artisan workshops showcasing Armenian crafts. With Dilijan's vibrant autumn colors setting the scene, we immerse ourselves in Armenia's beauty, culture, and rich history.

Day 5 Yeghinis - Road trip through Lake Sevan (B,D)

Our adventure begins early as we head southward to the tranquil shores of Lake Sevan, following the historic Silk Road route of Armenia. En route, we encounter remnants of the past such as ancient bridges and the conic Selim caravansary. As we traverse the mesmerising landscapes of the lower Caucasus Mountains, once referred to as the Armenia Mountains, the scenery captivates us at every turn.

Our overnight stay in Yeghnits unveils the village's hidden treasures. Here, we explore the open-air Kzhorer church, a testament to medieval Armenian architecture. Additionally, we have the unique opportunity to discover the recently unearthed medieval Jewish Cemetery, further enriching our understanding of Yeghnits' diverse historical tapestry.



Day 6-7 Tatev, Armenian village life (B,D)

Over the next two days, our journey immerses us deeply into the charm and history of Tatev. As we make our way to this captivating destination, our route takes us through the picturesque town of Jermuk, renowned for its mineral springs and spa resorts. We also explore Karahunj, often referred to as Armenia's version of Stonehenge, where ancient standing stones whisper tales of bygone eras. Additionally, the majestic Shaki waterfall adds a touch of natural splendor to our itinerary.

Upon arriving near Tatev, we embark on an exhilarating cable car ride known as the "Wings of Tatev." This aerial tramway offers breathtaking views of the Vorotan River Gorge and the surrounding landscapes, culminating in a spectacular approach to the Tatev Monastery. Perched majestically atop a rugged plateau, the Tatev Monastery welcomes us with its awe-inspiring presence. This UNESCO World Heritage Site, founded in the 9th century, stands as a testament to Armenia's spiritual and cultural heritage. The monastery complex, adorned with intricate stone carvings, ancient manuscripts, and historic chapels, provides a fascinating glimpse into Armenia's rich history and religious significance.

Beyond its architectural marvels, Tatev captivates us with its simple village life and warm hospitality. Our two-night stay in an authentic village guest house offers a genuine experience, allowing us to connect deeply with the amiable locals, savor traditional Armenian cuisine, and immerse ourselves in the timeless rhythms of village life.

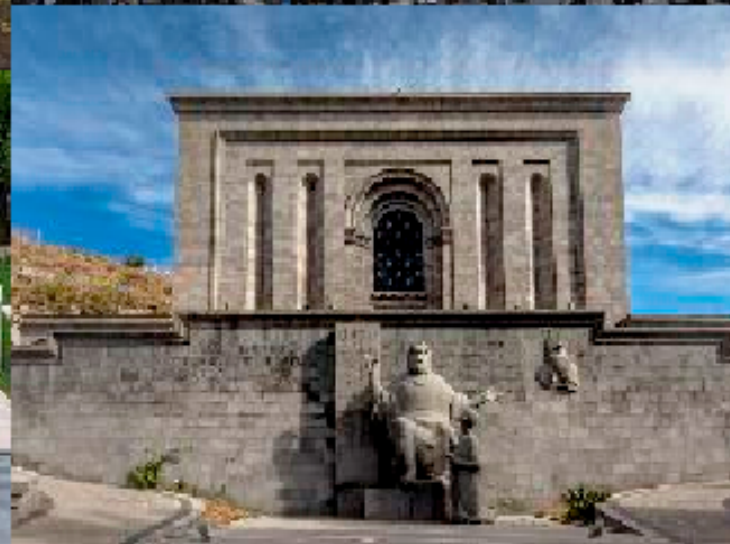




Lower Caucasus (Armenian) Mountains



Mt.Ararat dominates the view of Yerevan



Day 8 Yerevan: The Oldest Capital (B)

Yerevan is our ultimate destination today, but en route, we visit Noravank monastery and Khor Virap monastery with its background of Mt Ararat — arguably one of the most iconic photographic scenes in Armenia. Despite being physically located in Turkey, Mt Ararat is the holy mountain to Armenians. We arrive in Yerevan in the late afternoon so we can be in the Opera district in time to take some night photographs. Today will conclude with us eating delicious local delicacies at one of the cities restaurants.

Day 9, Yerevan (B)

Azad Valley — arguably the most beautiful and, probably, the most visited site in Armenia — is today's destination. It offers us many unprecedented photo opportunities ranging from nature to architecture. The valley is home to two amazing UNESCO World Heritage historical sites, the Geghard Monastery and the Garni Temple. The monastery is one of my top three destinations in Armenia with its 13th-century monastery being a uniquely complex structure as some of its chambers are carved into the adjacent mountain. The Garni Temple is the only surviving Pagan temple not only in Armenia but in the Caucasus as well. After lunch, it's time to head back to Yerevan where we have a free afternoon and evening to explore the town of our leisure

Day 10, Yerevan (B.D)

The capital and largest city, brimming with charm and historical significance. As we navigate this bustling metropolis, we're immediately captivated by its unique blend of ancient traditions and modern influences.

Yerevan boasts many attractions that showcase its rich heritage and cultural dynamism. One cannot miss the iconic Republic Square, with its magnificent buildings and dancing fountains that come alive in the evening. Nearby, the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts stands as a testament to Armenia's literary legacy, housing a vast collection of medieval manuscripts.

As we meander through the city's streets, the Cascade Complex beckons with its grand staircase offering panoramic views of Mount Ararat and the city skyline. The Cascade is not only a marvel of modern architecture but also houses the Cafesjian Center for the Arts, featuring contemporary art installations and exhibits. For history enthusiasts, the History Museum of Armenia provides a deep dive into Armenia's past, showcasing artifacts and exhibits that span millennia. Meanwhile, the bustling Vernissage Market offers a vibrant shopping experience, where one can find an array of handmade crafts, artworks, and souvenirs crafted by local artisans.

Beyond its attractions, Yerevan's charm lies in its people, known for their warm hospitality and friendly demeanor. Whether savoring traditional Armenian cuisine at a local cafe, engaging with artisans in the market, or simply strolling through the city's old and new quarters, Yerevan offers a glimpse into the soul of Armenia.

As the day unfolds, our exploration of Yerevan continues, each moment revealing a new facet of this captivating city, leaving an indelible mark on our journey through Armenia

Day 11, Yerevan (B)

Free time in Yerevan, let's catchup with our images and enjoy.

Day 12, Gyumri (B)

Embarking on this less-traveled route, our journey unfolds through sleepy villages and past ancient churches, each echoing tales of Armenia's storied past. As we navigate this picturesque landscape, we are drawn closer to one of the crowning jewels of Armenian heritage: the spiritual epicenter of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Etchmiadzin.

Etchmiadzin stands as a beacon of religious significance, housing the Cathedral which is widely recognized as the first Christian Cathedral in the world. Notably, Armenians are the First Nation to embrace Christianity as their state religion, making Etchmiadzin's historical importance even more profound. This sacred site is not only revered for its role in Armenia's spiritual journey but is also inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Adjacent to the grandeur of the Cathedral, the quaint settings of two smaller 6th-century churches, Gayaneh and Hripsime, add to the spiritual ambiance, each contributing to the rich tapestry of Armenian religious architecture.

Before our exploration of Etchmiadzin, our itinerary takes us to the evocative ruins of Zvartnots, another UNESCO-listed archaeological site. Set against the majestic backdrop of Mount Ararat, these ruins whisper tales of ancient civilizations, architectural marvels, and bygone eras, offering a glimpse into Armenia's illustrious past.

Continuing our journey to Gyumri for the rest after long day.



Etchmiadzin Cathedral

Day 13, Akhalsikhe, Vardzia and Khertvisi Fortress (B,D)

Today we leave Armenia to Georgia. Our journey leads us to one of Georgia's most iconic landmarks, the Vardzia cave town, dating back to the 12th century. Along the way, we pause to explore the impressive Khertvisi Fortress, constructed in the 10th century. The awe-inspiring Vardzia cave city continues to captivate visitors with its grandeur, beauty, and mystical ambiance. Exploring this cave town transports you back to the 12th century, a period when Georgia was flourishing during its renaissance. Within its depths, you'll discover charming churches adorned with exquisite frescoes, dwelling quarters, wine cellars, granaries, and even a pharmacy and library. In the afternoon, we return to Akhaltsikhe, known as the "New Castle" in Georgian. Here, we ascend to Rabati Castle, perched atop a hill, and explore its museum. The museum offers a journey through time, spanning from the 4th-millennium-BC Kura-Araxes Culture to 19th-century regional costumes.

Day 14 , Kutaisi, the other capital (B,D)

Today, we journey to Kutaisi, Georgia's third-largest city and historically recognized as the capital of the legendary Colchis, known as Aia in ancient times. According to myth, Jason and the Argonauts sailed up the river Phazisi (now known as Rioni) in search of the Golden Fleece.

Upon arrival in Kutaisi, we embark on a leisurely stroll through its historic old town. As an added experience, we visit the vibrant agricultural market, offering a glimpse into contemporary local life.

Our day continues with a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Gelati Monastery and Academy, founded in the 12th century and housing the tomb of Georgia's revered King David the Builder. Notably, the main church's altar features a mosaic of the Virgin Mary, crafted from 2 million golden stones. Concluding our exploration, we venture into the subterranean wonders of Prometheus Grotto, marveling at its captivating stalactites and stalagmites, a true testament to nature's splendor.



Vardzi, cave city



King Tamar statue , Akhalstikhe



On the way to Vardzia



Majestic Great Caucasus , on the way to Svaneti

Day 15, Mestia: From Martvili Canyon to Svaneti (B,D)

This day in Georgia begins with a journey to one of its most captivating natural landmarks: Martvili Canyon. As the morning sun casts its glow, visitors are treated to the enchanting sights of this geological marvel. The highlight of this segment is a tranquil 20- minute boat ride through the serene Dadiani Bath canyon. The gentle ripples of the water and the surrounding verdant landscapes create a sense of peace, making it a perfect start to our day. Following this serene boat journey, a leisurely stroll beckons along the canyon's pathways, where the iconic old bridge and the shimmering river provide picturesque moments for avid photographers.

As the day unfolds, our path takes us on a scenic drive towards the rugged beauty of Svaneti. En route, a stop at the renowned Enguri Hydroelectric Plant offers a glimpse into Georgia's technological advancements amidst its natural wonders. However, the real spectacle lies ahead, where the Enguri and Chubrula rivers converge in a breathtaking display of nature's artistry. Here, amidst dense coniferous forests and glistening mountain rivers, we pause for a cherished photo opportunity, encapsulating the essence of Georgia's diverse and awe-inspiring landscapes.

Day 16, Mestia: Hike to Chalaadi Glacier or relax in Mestia (B)

Today, our adventure unfolds as we embark on a journey towards the stunning Chalaadi Glacier, a captivating natural wonder nestled amidst the rugged landscapes of Georgia. After a scenic drive that sets the stage for the day's explorations, we arrive at our starting point.

For those eager to delve deeper into nature's embrace, an optional 3-hour trek awaits. This trail promises mesmerising views of the glacier, with every step offering a new perspective of its icy expanse juxtaposed against the backdrop of towering peaks. The trek provides an immersive experience, allowing participants to connect with the pristine wilderness and marvel at the raw beauty of the surroundings.

For those preferring a more leisurely pace or seeking alternative activities, there are opportunities to explore the nearby areas, soak in the serene ambiance, or engage in shorter walks to viewpoints that offer panoramic vistas of the glacier and surrounding landscapes.

After enjoying the splendours of Chalaadi Glacier, we make our way back to Mestia, a journey filled with reflections on the day's experiences. Upon our return, our exploration continues with a visit to the History and Ethnography Museum. This cultural gem offers a deep dive into Svaneti's rich heritage, showcasing exhibits, artefacts, and displays that illuminate the region's storied past, traditions, and the lives of its inhabitants throughout history.

Day 17, Mestia: Journey to Ushguli (B, L)

Today, our expedition leads us on a thrilling 4WD journey to Ushguli, a gem nestled amidst the majestic landscapes of Svaneti. Renowned as the highest continuously inhabited village in Europe, Ushguli promises not only unparalleled natural beauty but also a glimpse into centuries-old traditions and lifestyles.

As we traverse the scenic route, the journey itself becomes a highlight. En route, we traverse charming Svanetian villages, each exuding its unique charm and character. These picturesque hamlets invite us to pause, allowing for short stops to capture captivating photographs or to meander through narrow cobblestone lanes. Immersing ourselves in the local ambiance, we gain insights into the daily rhythms of life and witness firsthand the warm hospitality of the Svan people.

A particularly enchanting stop on our route is the Love Tower, a riverside edifice steeped in history and folklore, offering a poignant reminder of the region's rich heritage.

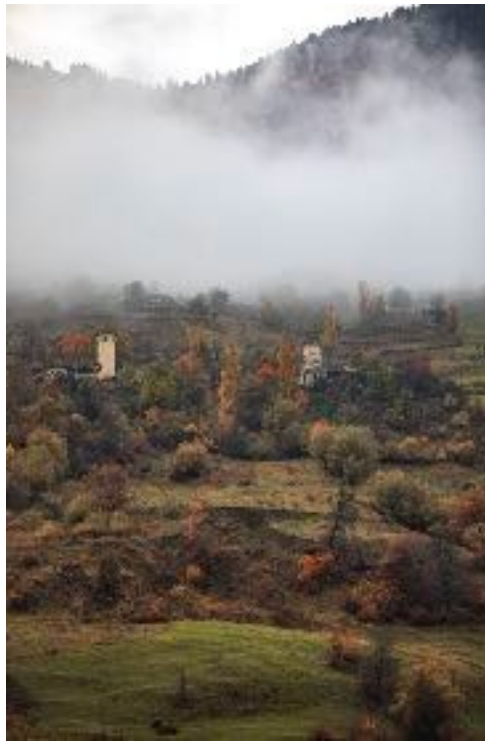
Upon our arrival in Ushguli, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, we set out to explore its iconic landmarks. Our first stop is the renowned Lamaria Church, a testament to medieval architectural prowess and spiritual devotion. As we wander through its ancient corridors, adorned with intricate frescoes and architectural details, we gain a deeper appreciation for the cultural significance of this sacred site.

Continuing our exploration, we venture into the heart of Ushguli to visit the Machubi House-Museum. This local treasure offers a fascinating glimpse into traditional Svan life, showcasing artifacts, crafts, and exhibits that chronicle the region's history, traditions, and evolution over the centuries. Engaging with local guides or inhabitants, we delve deeper into the stories and legends that have shaped Ushguli's unique identity, forging connections and memories that will resonate long after our

DAY 18, Kutaisi, 17 OCT (B)

Back to charming Kutaisi for overnight stay..

"Please note, our activities around Mestia are subject to weather conditions and the temperament of the mighty Caucasus Mountains."



Autumn in Svaneti



Day 19 -20 Telavi ; Two days of History, Wine, and Culture: Exploring Telavi and Beyond" (B)

We will leave Kutaisi this morning to travel to the eastern regions of Georgia, on the way we will visit Gori where Soviet dictator was born. We immerse ourselves in the captivating allure of Telavi, a quaint town steeped in history and culture. Our journey begins as we delve into the rich legacy of Telavi, once the residence of the last king of Georgia, Erekle II. Experience the vibrant atmosphere of the colorful agricultural market, where local produce and traditions come to life. Next, we venture to the historic Gremi citadel, where the ancient walls echo tales of the past. Explore the intricately adorned frescoes in the church, offering a glimpse into Georgia's artistic heritage and religious significance. As the day unfolds, indulge in a delightful lunch paired with a wine tasting experience at a local winery. Savor the distinct flavors of Georgian wines, celebrated for their unique characteristics and unparalleled quality.

Continuing our exploration, we visit the Tsinandali Estate, the summer residence of the illustrious Chavchavadze family. Wander through the estate's picturesque grounds, reflecting on its historical significance and architectural beauty. Our journey concludes with a fascinating encounter with a Qvevri master, who unveils the secrets behind crafting these iconic Georgian vessels used to store homemade wine underground. Gain insights into the age-old techniques, traditions, and cultural importance of Qvevri, a symbol of Georgia's viticultural heritage.

Day 21 Tbilisi (B, D)

We come back to beautiful Tbilisi and walk around to feel the vibes of the city. We will have farewell dinner in one of the local restaurants.

Day 22 Tbilisi (B)

Departure

Nuran Zorlu, an Australian commercial and advertising photographer, boasts over three decades of industry expertise. A recipient of the AIPP Travel Photographer of the Year (NSW) award twice, his work has garnered acclaim in competitions like 'Head On' and 'Shoot the Chef.' As an esteemed photography teacher and judge in Australian competitions, Nuran's influence extends beyond his captivating visuals.

His travel photography, showcased in prominent exhibitions and publications, reflects his passion for exploring diverse cultures. Nuran has lectured on travel photography and history at esteemed institutions like the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney University, Cezayir Cultural Centre in Istanbul, and the 2016 Tehran International Book Fair. His images have adorned the walls of both NSW and Victorian parliament houses.

Born in Istanbul to Armenian parents, Nuran is multilingual, fluent in English, Turkish, Armenian, and a bit of Persian. Holding a degree in philosophy and sociology from Istanbul University, he possesses a profound love for the region's history. This unique blend of cultural insight and photographic prowess ensures that Nuran's travel photography workshops transcend mere technical lessons, offering an intimate understanding of the regions and their inhabitants.

Nuran's illustrated travel journal, "Persia to Iran," garnered attention on ABC radio and featured in a BBC World Service documentary. He conducts photography workshops in Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Central Asia and Iran, further enriching participants with his regional expertise.

Beyond photography, Nuran's passion for food adds a flavorful dimension to his tours. A connoisseur of local dishes and the best regional restaurants, he ensures participants not only capture moments but also savor the culinary delights each region has to offer. Join Nuran Zorlu on a journey where photography becomes a gateway to cultural understanding, and every frame tells a story of history, diversity, and delectable experiences



Terms and Conditions

HEALTH REQUIREMENT

This tour is designed for people of all ages in good health and moderate fitness. Nuran Zorlu cannot accept responsibility for losses or extra expenses caused by, but not limited to, delays, changes in transportation services, weather, illness, injury, strike, quarantine, or other causes. Participants should be cautious during activities like hikes in National Parks, involving short steep descents and climbs. We will comply with National Parks' safety requirements, but participants need to be careful and inform us of any concerns about their capabilities before booking. Nuran Zorlu reserves the right to cancel any workshop, with a full refund. Participants must carry their camera equipment and water for activities.

RESERVATIONS

The tour group is limited to a maximum of 8 participants, with a minimum of 5 required. Places will be confirmed based on receipt of payment or deposit. Contact Nuran Zorlu at nuran@nuranzorlu.com or call 0413 619 292 to book.

PRICE

GEORGIA AND ARMENIA (Ancient Land in Autumn)

1st to 22 Oct 2027 Tour cost EUR 7950

Single room Supplement EUR 1500

Deposit to secure your place EUR 1500

PRICE INCLUDES/EXCLUDES:

- Accommodation in 3-4 star hotels or traditional homes.
- All breakfasts and mentioned meals
- Admission fees to museums and places in the itinerary.
- Comfortable AC/van, driver, gas, parking, bottled water in the vehicle.

The price does not include international airfare, tips, gratuities, and travel insurance.

DEPOSIT & PAYMENT

A deposit upon booking to reserve your place EUR 1500

Final payment by 20- June - 2027

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

Deposits are refundable up to 90 days prior to the event.

If canceling more than 90 days from the tour date, we will refund your deposit in full.

If the tour is not full, and we have the minimum number of bookings, we will refund your deposit in full.

If the tour is full, and you cancel within 90 days of the workshop date, we won't refund unless your place is filled by someone else.

No part refunds for unused portions of tour services

INSURANCE

Participants are advised to obtain their own insurance suitable for their needs.

RESPONSIBILITY

Nuran Zorlu has limited responsibility and may organise programs from various suppliers. Nuran Zorlu is not liable for any negligent or willful act or failure of any supplier. By participating, you agree that Nuran Zorlu shall not be liable for these failings.

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of New South Wales, Australia. Participants must agree to the Acceptance of Risk Release before the workshop. In the absence of signing the release, attendance confirms acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.

Cultural discovery and photography tours with NURAN ZORLU

GEORGIA AND ARMENIA

1st to 22th October 2027

7950 EUR

(single persons up to 1500 EUR)

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Tatev Monastery, Armenia