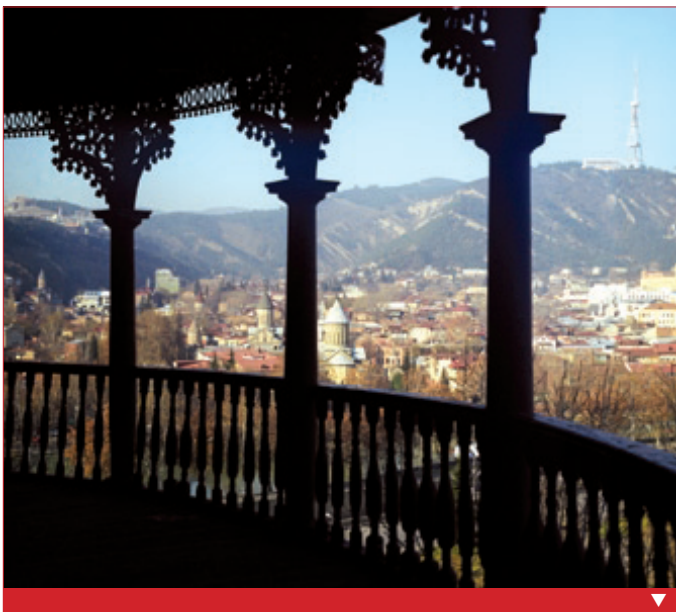
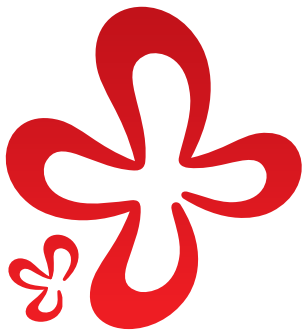


Country of life Georgia



TBILISI – H6

Tbilisi has been the capital of Georgia for over 1,500 years.

Here, the atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming, with its wooden houses, many churches, cafes and of course its famous spa-baths. It has the same character today as it had when the first traders and camel trains took refuge in Tbilisi on their long journeys along the Silk Road from Asia to Europe.

The mix of cultures meant that Tbilisi became an inspirational place for artists, philosophers and writers including Alexander Dumas, Pushkin, Lermontov, Tchaikovsky, George Gurdjieff, Knut Hamsen, Ramsay

MacDonald and Fitzroy MacLean.

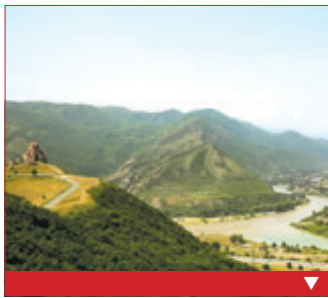
Walking through the old-town you find quaint wooden houses that climb up the hillsides to the Narikala fortress which overlooks and protects the capital. The pepper pot-shaped roofs of the distinctive Georgian churches stand out from the surrounding architecture that takes in Russian classicism, Art Nouveau, Soviet-era buildings and more modern structures.

This mix reflects the diverse nature of the people that have made Tbilisi their home. The old town still has its Jewish, Azeri and Armenian quarters and the mosques, synagogues, Armenian and Georgian.



BATUMI – C6

Located on the Black Sea, Batumi is one of the most beautiful and modern resorts in the region. This popular tourist destination hosts many local and international cultural events. Plácido Domingo, Jose Carreras, Chris Botti, Sting and Enrique Iglesias have all recently performed here while the fabulous atmosphere, unique architectural style and new luxury hotels make Batumi a great place for business and leisure alike.



MTSKHETA – G6

Looking down on Georgia's former capital of Mtskheta, the ancient Jvari

church perches prominently on a hilltop. Visible for miles around, it symbolises the importance of this holy site for all Georgians, overlooking the confluence of two major rivers, the Aragvi and the Mtkvari.

The impressive Svetitskhoveli Cathedral was built on the site of a former Zoroastrian temple to mark Georgia's conversion to Christianity in AD 337. It is the largest ancient structure in Georgia and its lofty interior walls carry some fabulous and unusual frescos. This splendid building was used down the centuries for the coronation and burial of Georgia's monarchs.



KUTAIISI – D5

Kutaisi is Georgia's second largest city after Tbilisi.

Situated in the west of Georgia Kutaisi has retained many features of a medieval town.

It is blessed with two UNESCO World Heritage sites, Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery. Nearby, Motsameta Monastery is beautifully located within lush green hills.



Bagrat's Cathedral – The cross-domed Cathedral of Dormition, overlooking Kutaisi was built in the 11th century during the reign of King Bagrat III. Notable for its grandiose proportions, façade composition and relief carvings, the cathedral was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1994.



Gelati Monastery – This well-preserved complex was founded by King David Aghmashenebeli (David the Builder) in 1106 and stands as one of the finest examples of medieval architecture in Georgia. The interior walls are covered, floor to ceiling, with brightly coloured frescoes that date from the church's inception. Originally Gelati contained an Academy with a reputation for learning that carried across the Caucasus and beyond.

SIGNAGI – I7

A large town perched on top of a hill, Signagi is enclosed by a long, spectacular, defensive wall built by King Erekle II in the second half of the 18th

century. Each of the wall's 23 towers are named after a nearby village and served as a refuge for the whole community. The town offers splendid views of the Alazani Valley and the Caucasus mountain range.



KAZBEGI – G4

Gergeti Trinity church is set poignantly on a hill directly below the towering white Mount Kazbegi (5,033m). Built six hundred years ago its stones have weathered repeated blizzards, rain and invasion to stand as a proud symbol of Georgian resilience in the face of adversity.

Travel information

Visa Requirements

Valid passports are required for visitors of all nationalities. There is no visa requirement for those who hold a passport issued by the United States of America, Canada, Japan, Israel, member countries of European Union, the Russian Federation, GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates), etc. Nationalities from CIS countries, except those holding passports from Turkmenistan do not require a visa.

For more information please visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia:

http://mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=96&info_id=10474

Getting There

By air
Direct flights to Tbilisi are available from many European and Asian cities. Non-stop flights can be taken from Amsterdam, Munich, Riga, Vienna, Frankfurt, Prague, Paris, Warsaw, Istanbul, Dubai, Tel-Aviv, Athens, Baku, Rome, Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Kiev, Minsk, Alma-Ata, Astana, Aktau, Tehran, Urumqi, Athens, London, Alma-Ata, Doha and Erbil.

Batumi International Airport

Direct flights to Batumi are available from Tbilisi, Moscow, Kiev, Istanbul, Minsk, Moscow-Dom, Kiev.

Kutaisi International Airport

Direct flights to Kutaisi are

available from Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov, Warsaw, Katowice, Moscow.

By land

Daily buses mainly to Tbilisi depart from Baku, Istanbul, Ankara, Trabzon, Yerevan and Athens.

By Train

Georgia is connected to Armenia and Azerbaijan. Trains from Baku are available every day and for more information and timetables, please visit www.railway.ge

By Sea

Georgia can be accessed by weekly ferries from Ukrainian ports of Ilychevsk and Odessa.

Accommodation

Major cities like Tbilisi and Batumi offer hotels of all categories from international four-star, to home-stays. In rural regions accommodation is primarily three-star family hotels, bed and breakfast and home-stays.

Cuisine

There are many excellent restaurants in Tbilisi serving both traditional Georgian and international cuisine, while restaurants in different regions of the country mainly offer traditional dishes.

Climate

The climate of the country is extremely diverse, considering the nation's small size. The Greater Caucasus Mountain Range plays an important role in moderating Georgia's climate, protecting the nation

against cold air from the north, while the Lesser Caucasus Mountains protect against from the very dry, hot air from the south. Average temperatures in summer range from 19 °C to 22 °C, and in winter from 1.5 °C to 3 °C.

Currency

The official currency in Georgia is the Georgian Lari usually indicated as GEL. The Lari is subdivided into 100 Tetri. One GEL equals 0.46 Euros or 0.60 U.S. Dollars (as of January 2012). Major hotels accept credit cards, but please check outside the main cities. Cash point machines are available throughout major towns and cities.

Electricity

Electrical current - 220 Volts, 50 Hz. EU standard plugs work throughout Georgia.

Communications

The country code is +995 and the area code for Tbilisi is 322. Georgian mobile operators (Geocell, Magticom and Beeline) cover almost the whole territory of the country and there are many Wi-Fi zones that enable visitors to use the internet for free.

Health

For the emergency services please call 112 - the Emergency Management Department.

For more information please visit:

www.georgia.travel



GUDAURI – G4

Located in the very heart of the Caucasus mountains and surrounded by some of Europe's most dramatic peaks, Gudauri is a popular ski resort and all four-seasons adventure destination.

Only a short drive – and even a shorter helicopter flight – from Tbilisi's International Airport, Gudauri is Georgia's year-round playground.

During the ski season, from December to mid-April, Gudauri offers exciting long and short runs for all classes of skiers and snowboarders. Expert skiers will want to try some of the most challenging off-piste slopes in Europe, while scenic cross-country trails and heli-skiing are also available.



MESTIA – D2

This small town in Svaneti has recently been developed as a new ski resort. Famous for its stone towers, beautiful landscapes and mountains Ushba

(4,690m) and Tetnuld (4,858m), it has always been a popular summer destination for adventure and cultural tours.

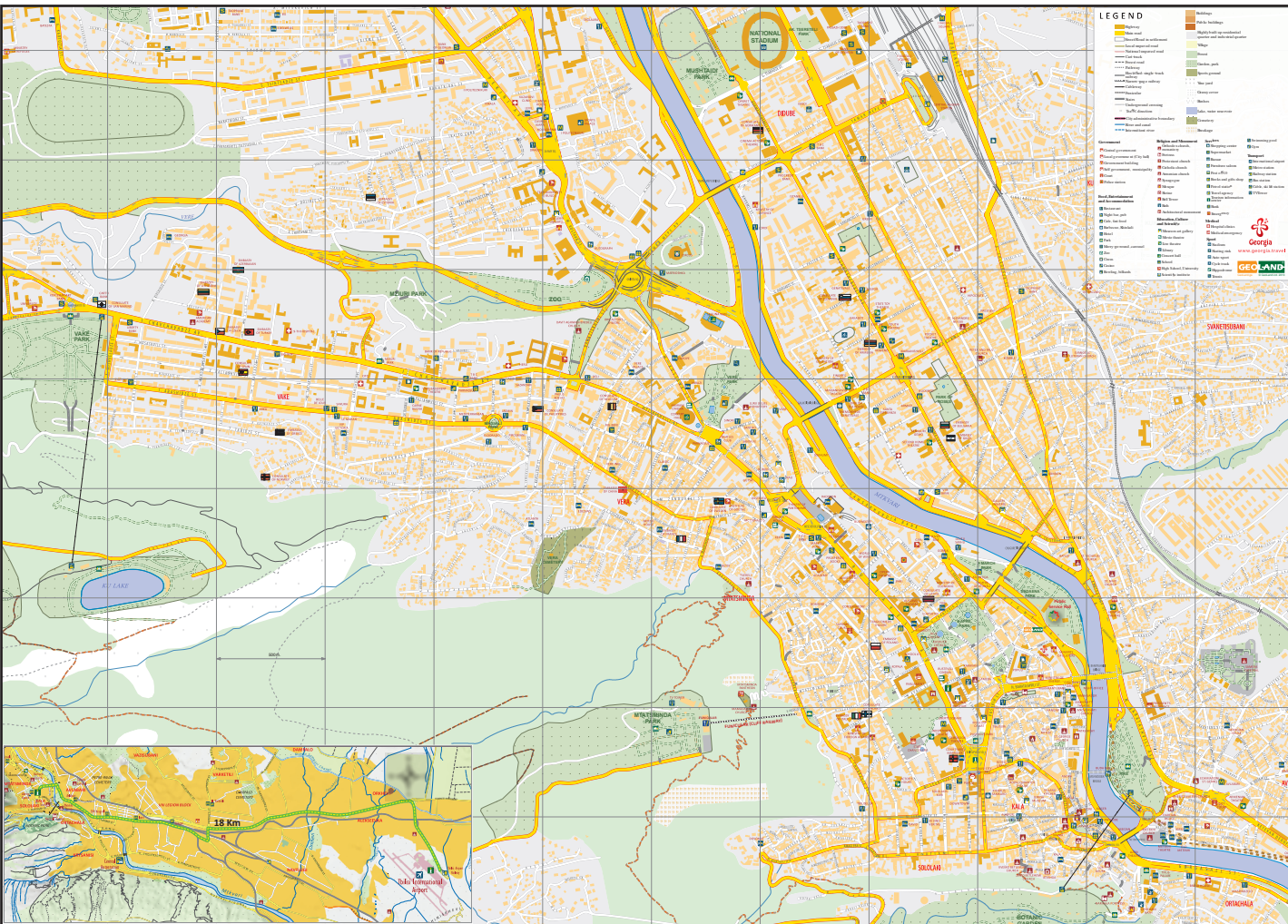
USHGULI – E3

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a picturesque and exceptionally remote village, unique not only for its amazing collection of medieval towers, but also its altitude 2,300m. As the highest village in Europe, it spends much of the year snowed in. On a clear day it looks straight into the face of Georgia's highest mountain, Shkhara 5,068m.



BORJOMI – E6

Borjomi is most famous for its mineral waters, whose natural high purity and healthy chemical components make it not only pleasant to drink but also a perfect preventive and curative against a number of diseases. With a large number of permanently spouting mineral water springs, it adjoins the large Borjomi National Park with its many well laid-out trails, overnight huts and mile upon mile of genuine, wild forest.





SHATILI – H4

The remote village of Shatili stands as an outstanding and unique example of fortress architecture. Located on the northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus, beyond a high pass, the village is composed of some 60 towers all clustered together to form one large protective building.



TUSHETI – I4

Tusheti is an unforgettable remote mountain destination and is one of Georgia's hidden secrets.

DMANISI – G8

Dmanisi is famous for its archaeological find of a 1.8 million years old hominid,

making the crucial link between Africa and the first Europeans.



CAVE TOWNS

Vardzia (E7) – This rock monastery cut into steep cliffs above a river valley, climbs up thirteen stories. Containing around 250

caves, its centre-piece is the royal complex founded during the reign of Queen Tamar (1184 – 1213). The main church is carved into the rock and the walls serve as a canvas for one of only three portraits of Queen Tamar painted in her lifetime.



Uplistsikhe (G6) – The large complex of natural caves at Uplistsikhe has been inhabited from pre-Christian times. Set on a hill overlooking a river it served as an important trade centre on the historic Silk Road until the 12th century. Today a small chapel perches on its summit and draws tourists and locals alike.



David Gareji (H7) – This grandiose complex of cave monasteries located in the semi-desert just south of Tbilisi, was established in the 6th century. It once housed over 10,000 monks and although it fell into neglect, today it functions as a monastery once more. Set on the top of high cliffs, the caves look out across a

spectacular vista, their walls still covered in striking religious frescos.



NATIONAL PARKS

Nearly 40% of Georgia's territory is still forest. There are more than 40 Protected Areas specially identified for conservation. Borjomi-Kharagauli is the largest National

Park in Europe and is the only member of PAN parks in the Caucasus region.



GROTTO – D5

Western Georgia is home to many long, deep karstic caves and some have underground rivers allowing you to have the extraordinary experience of boating in

a cave.
Sataplia is a karst cave located about 6 km north-west of Kutaisi, in a nature reserve of the same name. Discovered in 1925, the grotto features spectacular stalactites and stalagmites and is 890m long, 10m high and 12m wide. Famous dinosaur footprints have been discovered here as well.
Tskaltubo karst grotto is a unique natural phenomenon which has featured in many myths and stories, from Georgia to Ancient Greece. Its main 1 km-length path hosts many amazing sights: halls, galleries, an underground river, petrified flows, various forms of stalactites and stalagmites and other exotic natural phenomenon.

So come and explore it for yourself!

