Discovering the Caucasus: Armenia, Georgia & Azerbaijan

May 19-31, 2019

Harvey Goldblatt '77 PhD
Professor of Slavic Literatures
Dear Yale Traveler

Nestled between the Black and Caspian Seas, the former Soviet Republics of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan offer millennia of history and culture, with a rich legacy of art and architecture virtually unknown to Westerners. On an extraordinary journey through the Southern Caucasus, discover the region’s World Heritage sites, renowned hospitality, and stunning natural beauty. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to immerse yourself in three cultures that few travelers experience.

Begin in Yerevan, Armenia, where highlights include visits to the Cafesjian Center for the Arts and the studio of a duduk player. Discover some of Armenia’s marvelous medieval monasteries and cathedrals, starting with the impressive ruins of Zvartnots Cathedral. Spend a morning at 4th-century Etchmiadzin, visit chapels and churches at the pilgrimage site of Geghard, and view the mosaics of the Temple at Garni.

Admire gorgeous lakes and scenery, and visit a medieval monastery before crossing the Georgian border to Tbilisi. Discover the museums and churches of this ancient city, visit a working nunnery set amid breathtaking mountains, and enjoy a wine tasting in a hilltop village. Journey through nearby areas to see early Christian cathedrals and the cave city of Uplistsikhe.

In Azerbaijan, discover the Gobustan petroglyphs, remarkable Stone Age engravings. Enjoy a private cruise on the Caspian Sea, and then visit an enchanting carpet museum. Explore the walled city of Baku, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and marvel at glittering metalwork at the Museum of Natural History.

This is a truly awe-inspiring journey and I hope you will join us to experience it. Please visit www.yaleedtravel.org/caucasus19 to register now. Or contact Yale Educational Travel at 203-432-1952 or edtravel@yale.edu to hold your space on this wonderful program.

With best wishes from Yale,

Lauren Summers
Senior Director for Lifelong Learning and Travel
Association of Yale Alumni

www.yaleedtravel.org/caucasus19
Upcoming Trips

Cuba by Sea Aboard Variety Voyager
1/24/19-2/1/19
With Michael Veal, Professor of Music, African-American Studies, and American Studies

Waterways of the Tsars: Moscow to St. Petersburg Aboard Volga Dream
6/5/19-6/15/19
With Ivo Banac, Bradford Durfee Professor of History Emeritus

Adriatic Odyssey: Dubrovnik to Venice Aboard Sea Cloud
6/30/19-7/8/19
With Boris Berman, Professor of Piano, Yale School of Music

Yale Study Leader

Harvey Goldblatt '77 PhD

Professor of Slavic Literatures at Yale, is a leading specialist in many East-European cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions. He is the author of numerous important studies on diverse aspects of Slavic culture (especially in the medieval and premodern period), often written with a view towards establishing their links to larger global issues and Western ideas and structures of thought. Lauded by students for his cogent lectures and insights, as well as for his warmth, humor, and accessibility, Professor Goldblatt brings to this journey through the Southern Caucasus his passion for its unrivaled natural beauty and rich artistic legacy. He looks forward to revealing his extensive knowledge of the complex mosaic of myth and history that distinguishes the modern nations of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. He eagerly awaits exchanging ideas and perceptions of a region that long has served as a vibrant bridge between Europe and Asia but that has only rarely been visited.

Old Town, Baku

Front cover: Zvarnots Cathedral, Armenia

Yale Educational Travel • Association of Yale Alumni
Box 209010, New Haven, CT 06520-9010
Reservations: 203.432.1952 edtravel@yale.edu

Saint Hripsime Church, Etchmiadzin
ITINERARY
MAY 19-31, 2019

WELCOME PHONE CALL
Tuesday, May 7 (tentative)
Please join a pre-trip welcome call with your study leader at 4pm EST to meet other travelers, learn more about what to expect, and ask questions.

U.S. DEPARTURE
Sunday, May 19
Depart by air for Yerevan, Armenia, on an overnight flight with a connection.

YEREVAN, ARMENIA
Monday, May 20
Arrive this evening in Armenia’s capital city of Yerevan, situated on the Razdan River, for check-in at the centrally located Armenia Marriott Hotel on Republic Square.

YEREVAN
Tuesday, May 21
Begin the day with a visit to the studio of a duduk player (a wind instrument made from the wood of the apricot tree) who will introduce us to the region’s rich musical heritage. At the National History Museum, discover its collection of prehistoric and Bronze Age artifacts. Following lunch at leisure, visit the Cafesjian Center for the Arts, with its dynamic collection of contemporary art and sculpture. Gather this evening for a lecture by your study leader, followed by a welcome dinner. (B/D)

YEREVAN / ETCHMIADZIN / GEGHARD
Wednesday, May 22
Discover some of Armenia’s marvelous medieval monasteries and cathedrals, starting with the impressive ruins of the 7th-century Zvartnots Cathedral and the nearby Saint Hripsime Church, also from the 7th century and one of the oldest in the country. Continue to Etchmiadzin, the patriarchate of the Armenian Church. See lavash (Armenian flatbread) being made for your lunch. In the afternoon, visit the popular pilgrimage site of Geghard, a medieval complex of churches and chapels built beside and into the surrounding cliffs. Before returning to Yerevan, visit the Temple at Garmi, with its well-preserved Roman mosaics. (B/L)

YEREVAN
Thursday, May 23
Visit the Matenadaran, a repository of medieval manuscripts and books, and stop at the Armenian Genocide Memorial. Lunch and the afternoon are at leisure. Dine at a local restaurant this evening. (B/D)

YEREVAN / TBILISI, GEORGIA
Friday, May 24
This morning admire views of Lake Sevan and the Dilijan National Park. Continue to the dramatic Haghpat Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the 13th century this monastery, which includes a renowned library, was among the largest religious and educational centers in Armenia. In the afternoon cross the Georgian border to Tbilisi, one of the most ancient cities in the Caucasus and Georgia’s capital almost continuously since the 5th century. Accommodations and dinner are at the deluxe Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi. (B/L/D)

TBILISI
Saturday, May 25
Spend the day exploring Tbilisi. See the Metekhi Church of the Virgin and tour the excellent collection of icons at the Museum of Fine Arts with a specialist before a walk in the Old Town. After lunch at leisure, visit the Open-Air Museum of Ethnography, featuring houses and traditions from around the country. This evening feast on Georgian specialties, followed by a traditional performance. (B/D)

TBILISI / BODBE / SIGHNAGHI, GEORGIA
Sunday, May 26
Overlooking the vivid green of Alazani Valley and the Caucasus Mountains, the 9th-century Bodbe Monastery is dedicated to St. Nino, who converted the Georgians to Christianity in the 4th century. The working nunnery still draws many pilgrims to the saint’s tomb. Sample Georgian wines during lunch in the attractive town of Sighnaghi. Return to Tbilisi in the early evening. Alternatively, those who would enjoy light hiking in a spectacular mountain setting may take a day trip to the village of Stepansminda. From here, you can view Holy Trinity Church, built in the 14th century at an elevation of over 7,000 feet, and Mount Kazbeg, one of the most beautiful peaks in the Caucasus. (B/L)
TBILISI / MTSKHETA / UPLISTSIKHE / GORI  
Monday, May 27
Today visit Mtskheta, Georgia’s former capital and a spiritual center since the dawn of Christianity. Discover the impressive 11th-century Cathedral of Svetitskhoveli, one of the holiest sites in Georgia, and the 6th-century Dzhvari Cathedral, with its magnificent view over the town. Then continue to the ancient cave city of Uplistsikhe, carved into a rocky plateau, where you will have lunch. Before returning to the hotel, stop in Gori to visit Joseph Stalin’s birthplace and museum. Dinner is at leisure, perhaps to try one of Tbilisi’s fine restaurants.  (B/L)

TBILISI / BAKU, AZERBAIJAN  
Tuesday, May 28
On a special tour of the Georgian History Museum, view the exquisite gold works in the Treasury and archaeological collections showing the country’s historical links with Greece and the Near East. After an early lunch, fly to Baku, Azerbaijan, and transfer to the elegant Four Seasons hotel in the Old City.  (B/L/D)

BAKU  
Wednesday, May 29
Drive to the Gobustan National Preserve in Central Azerbaijan to see fascinating rock art and the remains of human settlements that date back to the Paleolithic Age. More than 6,000 ancient engravings depict a variety of subjects including animals, battles, dances, and the heavens. Return to Baku for lunch and a private cruise on the Caspian Sea. Conclude the day with tea and a viewing of highlights of the Carpet Museum.  (B/L)

BAKU  
Thursday, May 30
Explore Baku’s walled city, near the western end of the Asian trade routes, with its maze of narrow alleys and ancient buildings. Tour Shirvanshah’s Palace, built after the country’s capital moved to Baku in the 14th century, and admire the glittering jewelry and fine copper work in the National Museum of History. Lunch and the afternoon are at leisure to discover historic caravanserais and antique shops. Celebrate a fascinating trip during your farewell dinner.  (B/D)

U.S. RETURN  
Friday, May 31
Depart the hotel early this morning for the flight home.  (B)

What is Included:
- Program of lectures and discussions with Harvey Goldblatt, Professor of Slavic Languages.
- Eleven nights hotel accommodations as per itinerary.
- All meals as indicated in the itinerary; bottled water and coffee / tea with all meals; thoughtfully selected wine and beer with lunches and dinners.
- Escorted sightseeing by motor-coach and entrance fees for visits.
- Economy class airfare Tbilisi / Baku.
- Airport / hotel / airport group transfers for those on suggested flights; porterage.
- Taxes and service charges; gratuities to guides and drivers.
- Emergency medical evacuation services through UHC Global Assistance.

What is Not Included:
- International airfare.
- Passport / visa fees.
- Meals not specified.
- Alcoholic beverages other than wine and beer at included lunches and dinners.
- Personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls, internet, etc.
- Trip insurance.
- Baggage in excess of one suitcase.
- Any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

Included meals indicated each day as B/L/D = Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.

www.yaleedtravel.org/caucasus19
**Accommodations**

**ARMENIA MARRIOTT HOTEL, YEREVAN**
Centrally located on Republic Square, the Marriott Yerevan is a sophisticated modern hotel behind an elegantly carved stone façade. On-property amenities include soundproof rooms, three restaurants serving international cuisine, and a spa with a beauty salon and fitness center.

**FOUR SEASONS, BAKU**
On the waterfront promenade and a short walk from the Old City, this Beaux Arts-style hotel features a penthouse fitness center, skylit indoor pool, Turkish hammam, Italian restaurant, and two lounges. Nearly all of the 171 guest rooms have balconies with views of the Caspian Sea or the Old City.

**BILTMORE HOTEL, TBILISI**
The Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi is ideally situated within the historic and cultural district of Georgia’s capital city. The grand lobby echoes the nostalgia of a bygone era. Its 214 luxury rooms and suites provide free high-speed wireless Internet, upscale bathroom amenities, and beautiful views over the old and new city. An urban retreat or the ideal partner for those conducting business in the city, The Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi is the ultimate address for discerning travelers.

**Program Cost**

$9,599  
(per person, double occupancy)

Single rate: $10,899

Note: Itinerary subject to change. Some excursions in this program involve a significant amount of walking.
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To reserve, return this form with your deposit of $1,000 per person. Final payment is due February 19, 2019.

Payment Options

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  - visa
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Accommodations

Hotel Room Preference

- One bed
- Two beds
- Single

- I wish to have a single (limited availability – please call)
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Signature
Date

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- I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read the Terms & Conditions and Responsibility sections of this brochure and agree to their terms on behalf of myself and the members of my party named above.

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Date

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Primary phone
Secondary phone
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1) Name as on passport
   Date of birth
   Yale connection
   Passport origin
   Relationship to other guest

2) Name as on passport
   Date of birth
   Yale connection
   Passport origin
   Relationship to other guest

Terms & Conditions

MOBILITY & FITNESS TO TRAVEL
The right is retained to decline, to accept, or to retain any person as a member of this trip who, in the opinion of Yale Educational Travel ("YET") is unfit for travel or whose physical or mental condition may constitute a danger to themselves or to others on the trip. Passengers requiring special assistance, including without limitation those who permanently or periodically use a wheelchair, must be accompanied by someone who is fit and able to assist them, and who will be totally responsible for providing all required assistance.

CANCELLATION
In addition to airline cancellation penalties, all cancellations for any reason whatsoever will be subject to a $500 per person cancellation fee. Cancellation from 120 days to 91 days prior to departure will result in forfeiture of 20% of the entire cost of the trip per person; 90 days to 61 days, 50% of the trip cost per person; cancellation from 60 days up to the time of departure will result in 100% forfeiture of the entire cost of the trip. All cancellations must be submitted in writing to Yale Educational Travel.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE
A deposit of $1,000 per person, payable to Arrangements Abroad, of which $500 (see CANCELLATION) is nonrefundable for administrative fees, is required with the reservation application. Final payment must be received 120 days prior to departure. Mail to: Arrangements Abroad, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10018-3721. Or call: 212-514-8921 or 800-221-1944.

Complete Terms and Conditions will be sent after registration and are available at: www.yaleedtravel.org/faqs

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Enjoy a wine tasting in a hilltop village in Georgia, where wine production dates back 8,000 years.

Discover the Caspian Sea on a private cruise.

Explore the UNESCO-recognized walled city of Baku, with its cobblestone streets lined with antique shops and medieval caravanserai.