

A Caspian Odyssey Along the Ancient Silk Road

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Overview

The Highlights

- Explore six central Asian countries by a combination of road, private jet and private train - the luxurious, fully en-suite *Golden Eagle* luxury train;
- Climb Yerevan's Cascade, a giant stairway providing incredible views of the city and Mount Ararat in the distance;
- Discover Tblisi's colorful old town, with winding streets and alleyways;
- Take in the 2,500 year-old city of Khiva, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site;

- View Samarkand's Registan Square, beautifully lit at night;
- Visit Gori, birthplace of Stalin, including a museum of the infamous Soviet dictator;
- Emir's Palace of the Moon and Stars, located outside Bukhara;
- Cave city of Uplistsikhe, dating from the 6th century BC.
- Option to begin your journey on the *Golden Eagle* on Day 9 with a special 8-day tour, [Jewels of the Silk Road: Ashgabat to Almaty](#).

The Tour

From Armenia to Kazakhstan, the captivating Caspian Odyssey journey heads east through a magnificent menagerie of medieval cities, breathtaking archaeological architecture and palatial Islamic masterpieces.

Begin your trip in Yerevan and explore the fascinating South Caucasus region before flying over the Caspian Sea to board the luxurious *Golden Eagle* train. Travel by luxury train the ancient Silk Road trading route through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Itinerary

Day 1: Yerevan, Armenia

Upon arrival at Yerevan International Airport you will be met and transferred to the five-star Alexander Hotel (or similar), where we stay for two nights.

Boasting a prestigious central location the Alexander, a Luxury Collection Hotel, is located in the heart of Yerevan's historic quarter and allows guests a relaxing stay in luxurious surroundings. Even the hotel's façade with a history dating back to the 18th century presents a unique glimpse into the country's fascinating past.

For early arrivals to Yerevan, do not miss the opportunity to take advantage this afternoon of a *Freedom of Choice* option to visit the Mother Cathedral of the Armenian Apostolic Church, often referred to as the Vatican of Armenia. Built in 301 AD, Etchmiadzin is considered the oldest cathedral in the world. During the tour, we will visit the Treasury Museum of Etchmiadzin. The exhibition showcases important Christian relics, such as the pieces of the True Cross, a fragment of Noah's Ark, and the Holy Spear which pierced the body of Christ.

After Etchmiadzin we make a brief stop at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Zvartnots Cathedral. Built in the 7th century, the cathedral features a unique circular shape. From here we make a

stop at the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial. This expansive complex, which was completed in 1967, was built to honor the 1.5 million Armenians killed by genocide during the 20th century. Today, the hillside memorial serves as a destination for pilgrims who want to pay homage to the fallen.

Tonight we enjoy a Welcome Dinner at our hotel whilst you meet your fellow travelers and look forward to the journey ahead.

Day 2: Yerevan, Armenia

The Yerevan skyline is dominated by Mount Ararat in nearby Turkey, with its snow-covered peak towering in the distance. Yerevan has a rich history and was occupied as early as 6,000 BC. The fortress of Erebuni was erected there in the 8th century BC. Seized by a succession of conquerors, the city later passed back and forth between the Turks and the Persians until 1827, when it was taken by Russia. It became the capital of Soviet Armenia in 1920 and following the demise of the Soviet Union, the capital of the new nation of Armenia.

Our day's touring will take us 23 miles (37 km) out of Yerevan to the ancient Geghard Monastery. The beautiful monastery contains a number of churches and tombs, many of them cut into the rock. The complex of medieval architecture is set into a landscape of great natural beauty, surrounded by towering cliffs at the head of the Azat Valley.

We'll also visit the 1st Century pagan temple of Garni, built to worship the Sun God Mitra. We'll explore the remains of an ancient fortress, palace and baths there. Lunch will also be taken at this stunning location.

This evening we head to the Armenia Wine Company, located close to Yerevan. Here we have opportunity to explore the entire process of Armenian wine making technology, walk through the factory cellars, learn about the evolution of Armenian wine making history at the special museum and try the premium wines followed by authentic and exclusive dinner.

Day 3: Yerevan & Lake Sevan, Armenia

This morning we will visit The Cascade, a giant stairway made of limestone. The stairs afford visitors unobstructed views of central Yerevan and Mount Ararat in the distance. Located inside the staircase is the Casfesian Museum of Modern Art, where we make a short visit.

Leaving Yerevan, our journey takes us to Lake Sevan, where we stop for lunch with stunning views. Along with Lake Van and Lake Urmia, Sevan was considered one of the three great lakes of the historical Armenian Kingdom, collectively referred to as the Seas of Armenia; it is the only one within the boundaries of today's Republic of Armenia.

After lunch we continue our way, by coach, to Armenian-Georgian border in Bagratashen, first driving through the spa town of Dilijan, well known for its forest landscapes and medicinal mineral water. We make a coffee & brandy stop at Avan Dzoraget Hotel, nestled amongst the forest-covered hills and rocky slopes of the Caucasus Mountains.

This evening we arrive into the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, where we stay for the next three nights

at the Paragraph Freedom Square, a Luxury Collection Hotel (or similar).

Day 4: Tbilisi, Georgia

Heading into Georgia, we visit Tbilisi. Hemmed in by the Surami Range, the city extends for 17 miles (27 km) along the banks of the River Kura. Despite the wars and fires which caused innumerable changes in the topography of Tbilisi, the old part of the city still retains much of its original layout, a spider's web of narrow winding streets and alleyways.

Historical sites we visit include the 13th century Metekhi church, a cross cupola church which forms part of the Royal Residential complex, the 5th century Sioni Cathedral, the main church of Tbilisi, before exploring the Old Town. We then depart to Chateau Mukhrani wine estate for a delicious lunch and spend the afternoon tasting local wines.

In the evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant accompanied by a traditional Georgian dance performance.

Day 5: Gori, Uplistsikhe Cave City and Mtskheta, Georgia

Gori is one of the oldest cities in Georgia, founded in the 7th century AD as Tontio. Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader, was born here in 1879. He spent his childhood years in the city and later (1888-94) studied at its theological seminary. The small house where Stalin was born is preserved under a canopy outside the huge columned palace-like building that houses the Stalin Museum. To the side of the museum is Stalin's private railway carriage. The museum offers a haunting and fascinating insight into a man responsible for more deaths and suffering than any other human being. Alternatively, guests can choose to visit a local Ceramics Museum, housing the pottery of traditional Georgian ceramicist George Tatulashvili.

The famous cave city of Uplistsikhe dates from the 6th century BC and is first mentioned in the chronicles of the 1st century AD. Carved into rocky plateau we find huge echoing halls, meandering corridor-streets, chambers for pagan worship and even the remains of Georgia's oldest theatre, complete with auditorium, stage and orchestra pit. Like the other cave-towns of Georgia, it is rooted in the prehistoric traditions of the peoples of the Near East.

Late afternoon, our explorations will take us to the city of Mtskheta, Georgia's Old Capital. Due to its historical significance and numerous ancient monuments, Mtskheta became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

We will also enjoy a private performance of traditional Georgian polyphonic singing – this is an immersive experience which offers a truly unique insight into the beautiful local culture and heritage.

Day 6: Tbilisi, Georgia to Baku, Azerbaijan

This morning, take a visit to the Janashia State Museum of Georgia which houses an extraordinary collection of gold filigree work dating back to 6th Century BC. We will then continue to the Old Town with Gabriadze's Clock Tower, Baratashvili Street, and the historic Anchiskhati Basilica.

After lunch in the city, we board our private jet for the short flight to Baku. Upon arrival we check-in for three nights at the five-star Four Seasons, Baku (or similar).

Day 7: Baku, Azerbaijan

Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, lies on the western shore of the Caspian Sea and the southern side of the Apsheron Peninsula, around the wide, curving sweep of the Bay of Baku. The bay, sheltered by the islands of the Baku Archipelago, provides the best harbour of the Caspian Sea, while the Apsheron Peninsula gives protection from violent northerly winds. Baku derives its international importance from its huge oil industry. The core of present-day Baku is the Old Town, or fortress of Icheri-Shekher. Most of the walls, strengthened after the Russian conquest in 1806, survive, as does the 90 ft (27 m) tower of Kyz-Kalasy (Maiden Tower, 12th century). The walled old town is highly picturesque, with its maze of narrow alleys and ancient buildings. These include the Palace of the Shirvan-Shahs, now a museum, the oldest part of which dates from the 11th century. Also of the 11th century is the Synyk-Kala Minaret and Mosque (1078-79). We will tour these historic sights by bus before exploring the Old Town by foot.

After lunch in a local restaurant, enjoy an afternoon of free time to discover Baku at your leisure. Perhaps visit the local Carpet Museum, indulge in a cultural escape at the National Museum, or simply relax and soak up Azerbaijan's unique atmosphere.

Tonight, we visit the magnificent Villa Petrolea. Nearly 150 years ago, before the Nobel Peace Prizes were created, the Nobel brothers themselves played a key role in Baku's first 'oil boom'. Enjoy a guided tour with champagne, canapes, and a sumptuous dinner within its historic walls.

Day 8: Baku, Azerbaijan

This morning, we tour the UNESCO-honored Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. Located 40 miles (64 km) from Baku on the west bank of the Caspian Sea, Gobustan is an outstanding archaeological site of more than 6,000 pre-historic rock engravings. The area also features the remains of inhabited caves, settlements and burials. This is followed by lunch overlooking the Caspian Sea.

Returning to the city in the afternoon, you can choose to enjoy free time in the city or visit a local Zoroastrian temple before dinner in the Four Seasons Hotel (or similar).

Day 9: Khiva, Uzbekistan

Following breakfast, we take a morning flight onboard our private plane to Urgench (for Khiva). Founded 2,500 years ago Khiva became one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts as it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia and is now a World Heritage Site.

A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. Stepping back in time, we discover its impressive mosques, madrassas, bazaars and minarets within the city's ancient walls.

*For travelers who have booked the [Jewels of the Silk Road](#) journey, your adventure begins today.

Day 10: Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Today, we arrive in Bukhara and begin with a visit to The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara. Following, we visit Poi-Kalyan Square. Stroll through the mosque's large pillar-domed galleries and deeply recessed niches, and you will be transported to a bygone era.

Immerse yourself in the lively pulse of the city as we explore the bustling Trading Domes of Bukhara and gather at Lyabi-Hauz Square.

This evening, weather permitting, we will enjoy a barbecue on the station platform before our train departs.

Day 11: Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Just the mention of Samarkand instantly conjures up images of the Silk Road, more so than any other town. Founded in the 6th century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture hints at its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia, and is particularly noted for its architectural remains from the 14th to the 17th century, when it flourished as the fabled capital of the Mongol empire of Timur and his successors.

Today we will visit some of its most significant sites, including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque, and the Ulag Beg observatory, one of the earliest Islamic astronomical observatories built in 1428. Before dinner, we will return to the now illuminated and awe-inspiring Registan Square for an incredible light show that weaves the rich tapestry of Samarkand's history and significance.

Day 12: Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Today we arrive in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. We spend time touring this modern Soviet-style city, which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966.

Our tour of the city includes the Old Town, where traditional homes and religious buildings line the narrow streets. In a small library here we will be privileged to see one of Islam's most sacred relics – the world's oldest Koran. This is followed by a visit to the Railway Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts.

Day 13: Onboard

Enjoy a more leisurely pace today as we journey through the striking landscapes of Uzbekistan, before crossing the border into Kyrgyzstan. Onboard, delve deeper into the region with a fascinating Q&A session led by your expert Tour Leader, and uncover the secrets of your exquisite cuisine during an engaging masterclass with our talented culinary team.

Day 14: Lake Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan

Today, we enjoy an extended visit to the magnificent Lake Issyk-Kul, a true natural wonder nestled in the heart of the Kyrgyz mountains. Stretching over 170 kilometres in length and up to 70 kilometres wide, it is recognised as the second-largest alpine lake in the world.

Immerse yourself in the rich nomadic heritage of Kyrgyzstan with a privately arranged cultural event along the lake's shores. Enjoy a captivating display of traditional sports and games such as archery, horseback wrestling, and hunting with majestic Golden Eagles.

After the festival, there will be the option to visit the outdoor Museum of the Petroglyphs before returning to the train.

This evening we enjoy our Farewell Dinner onboard the *Golden Eagle* as we head overnight to our final destination of Almaty.

Day 15: Almaty, Kazakhstan

This morning we arrive into Almaty, our final destination. We bid farewell to the *Golden Eagle* as we disembark in Almaty.

Today we will take a tour of the city, including a visit to Panfilov Park, located in the heart of the city, and home to the Zenkov Cathedral, a 19th-century Russian Orthodox Church made entirely of wood.

Overnight we stay for one night at the Ritz-Carlton Almaty hotel (or similar).

Day 16: Almaty, Kazakhstan

Following breakfast you will be transferred to Almaty Airport for your onward flight.

Dates & Prices

2026 Dates

September 14 - September 29

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Silver Class	\$30,700	\$46,100	25%
Gold Class	\$39,700	\$65,400	25%
Imperial Suite	\$69,700	\$139,200	25%

All prices are per person.

2027 Dates

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Silver Class	\$32,300	\$48,300	25%
Gold Class	\$41,700	\$69,600	25%
Imperial Suite	\$76,700	\$153,100	25%

All prices are per person.

2027 dates are preliminary and are subject to change.

More

Travel visas may be required for Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, depending on your nationality.