



EXETER  
INTERNATIONAL

EXETER  
FOUNDER'S TOUR  
GEORGIA 2023







## ITINERARY AT A GLANCE:

DAY 1	SEP 15	ARRIVAL IN TBILISI
DAY 2	SEP 16	TBILSI – BORJOMI
DAY 3	SEP 17	BORJOMI – VARDZIA & RABATI – BORJOMI
DAY 4	SEP 18	BORJOMI – GORI – TBILISI
DAY 5	SEP 19	TBILISI
DAY 6	SEP 20	TBILISI – KAKHETI REGION
DAY 7	SEP 21	KAKHETI
DAY 8	SEP 22	KAKHETI REGION – TBILISI
DAY 9	SEP 23	TBILISI – ONWARD

# WHY EXETER INTERNATIONAL?

## **Our Experience**

At Exeter International we have been creating memories and crafting custom-designed journeys for 27 years. We are a team of specialists committed to providing the best travel experiences in our destinations. Each of our experts has either travelled extensively on reconnaissance trips, or has lived in their area of expertise, giving us unparalleled first-hand knowledge. Because we focus on specific parts of the globe, we return to the same destinations many times, honing our experience over the years.

## **Knowledgeable Up-to-the-Minute Local Information**

We are best placed to give you advice about traveling to Europe and beyond; from logistics and new protocols in museums, hotels and restaurants in each country. We are here to expertly guide you through the new normal in travel.

## **Original Custom Programs, Meticulously Planned**

Our experts speak your language both literally and culturally. Our advice and recommendations are impartial, honest, and always have the individual in mind. We save valuable time in pre-trip research and focus on developing experiences that enrich and enhance your experience. Once on your journey you will have complete peace of mind with our local 24-hour contact person who is on hand to coordinate any changes in your program or help you in the case of any emergency.

## **Hand-Selected Guides**

We know that guides are one of the most important components of any travel experience. That is why we only use local experts who have a history of working with our guests and whom we know personally. We are extremely particular in selecting our guides and are confident that they will be one of the most memorable aspects of any of our trips.

## **Financial Stability**

We are proud to be recognized by Allianz Insurance on their list of covered [travel suppliers](#) to give you additional peace of mind.

# DAY 1



## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 | ARRIVAL IN TBILISI

Arrive today in Tbilisi. Meet your private driver just past baggage claim and customs in the arrival hall. Transfer to your hotel and enjoy your time at leisure.

Although Tbilisi is a capital city, it is surrounded by mountains, has a river at its heart, and is green and verdant, giving it an air of leisure that is unusual in a major city.

This evening meet in the hotel lobby at **6PM** for a transfer to one of Tbilisi's top restaurants where we will have a Welcome Dinner and celebrate being together to explore this amazing country.

### EXETER SERVICES

Airport Transfer; Dinner Transfers

### MEALS

Dinner

### HOTEL

Stamba

## DAY 2



## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 | TBILISI – BORJOMI

We'll all meet today at noon in the hotel lobby and transfer to Chateau Mukhrani.

### **Exeter Extraordinary Experience**

Our lunch will be served at Chateau Mukhrani along with a wine tasting. We will experience a performance of Khridoli, Georgian martial arts, a centuries old tradition that has been now enjoying a great revival and is even taught in the Georgian Army.

We'll then transfer to Borjomi, a journey of about 2 hours. Upon arrival, check in and enjoy the evening at leisure. For those interested, you may visit the park just next door and drink from Tbilisi's "fountain of youth", the source of internationally known Borjomi water.

### **EXETER SERVICES**

Full-Day Vehicle, Driver & Guide

### **MEALS**

Breakfast & Lunch

### **HOTEL**

Crowne Plaza Borjomi



## DAY 3



### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | BORJOMI – VARDZIA – BORJOMI

We'll meet our guide today at 10AM and set off for a visit to Rabati Castle and Vardzia Cave Monastery.

Our first visit today will be Rabati Castle. Destroyed and rebuilt many times since the 13th century, the fortress site received a major restoration in 2011. Inclusive of an 18th century mosque, a 19th century Orthodox church, the Djakeli palace remains and a history museum, the top portion of Rabati fortress offers great viewing sites in the towers.

Continue to Vardzia where we will have lunch at Vardzia Resort. After lunch, we will visit Vardzia Cave Monastery. *Please note, this requires some level of fitness, as you'll be climbing through the ruins of the monastery.*

In the 12th century, as the kingdom of Georgia was trying to defend itself from the Mongols, Queen Tamar reportedly ordered construction of a sanctuary. In 1185, digging began on the side of Erusheli mountain. At completion, this underground fortress had more than 10 levels, a throne room, a church and nearly 6000 apartments. Sadly, just 100 years later, an earthquake destroyed more than two-thirds of the city, exposing the inside of the mountain. It remained in use by the monastery until 1551, when it was raided by Persian troops. Today, about 300 rooms and halls remain open to visitors.

Before returning to Borjomi for the evening, we will stop at Khertvisi fortress, situated on a rocky hill above the Mtkvari and Paravani Rivers. The fortress was built in the 2nd century. The church dates to 985 and the present walls were built in 1354.

Transfer back to Borjomi for the remainder of the evening at leisure.

#### EXETER SERVICES

Vehicle, Driver & Guide

#### MEALS

Breakfast & Lunch

#### HOTEL

Crowne Plaza Borjomi

## DAY 4



### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | BORJOMI - GORI – TBILISI

This morning we will check out of our hotel and meet our guide and driver at 10AM. Today we will transfer back to Tbilisi via Gori, best known for being the birthplace of Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, better known as Stalin. Georgian people were understandably proud that one of their own rose to be the leader of the Politburo, but Stalin's success only brought misery to his homeland when he was Soviet leader. His original modest home still stands and is set against the backdrop of the Stalin Museum's buildings and carriages from his private train.

We'll then transfer to Nika Marani to enjoy lunch and a wine tasting.

Next, our guide will take us to visit Mtskheta, the spiritual heart of Georgia. Mtskheta has an almost mythical significance to many Georgians as this was the first capital of the nation and was also where Christianity was first introduced into the country. Mtskheta's monuments date back to the 6th Century including the Jvari Monastery, the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and the Samtavro Church.

Arrive in Tbilisi, check in and enjoy the evening at leisure.

#### EXETER SERVICES

Vehicle, Driver & Guide

#### MEALS

Breakfast & Lunch

#### HOTEL

Stamba





## DAY 5

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | TBILISI TOURING

We will meet our guide today at 10AM to explore some of Tbilisi's highlights including elegant Rustaveli Avenue, the Governor's Palace and the Parliament Building.

#### **Exeter Extraordinary Experience**

Later, we'll have a performance of the Erisoni National Ensemble, a Georgian Academic ensemble of folk singing and dancing which has been in existence since 1885.

#### **Exeter Extraordinary Experience**

For lunch today we'll be invited into one of the leading restaurants of the city for a khachapuri making class. Khachapuri is the national dish of Georgia and it is delicious- a hot, freshly baked bread filled with warm cheese. We will learn about the different styles and traditions of making khachapuri while we watch our creation baking in the brick ovens. We'll then enjoy an unforgettable feast before continuing with touring.

We'll then continue sightseeing in Old Tbilisi. One of the most prominent structures in the Maidan is the Armenian Cathedral of St. George. As you walk up Leselidzes Kucha, the main thoroughfare, you will see Tbilisi's main synagogue, right next door to the 16th century Jvari Georgian Church and the Norashen Armenian Church. Ancient and fascinating Tbilisi is at its finest in this district. You'll also see the Abanotubani, or the sulfur baths, which were frequented by Pushkin and Dumas.

#### **Exeter Extraordinary Experience**

Finally, we will have a special private boat trip on the Kura river (weather permitting). What looks like a dock on the side of the river suddenly starts moving and you find yourself cruising along the river. This is the perfect way to experience Tbilisi from a different perspective.

This evening we'll be at leisure to explore Tbilisi by night.

#### **EXETER SERVICES**

Full-Day Vehicle, Driver & Guide

#### **MEALS**

Breakfast & Lunch

#### **HOTEL**

Stamba



## DAY 6



### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | TBILISI – KAKHETI REGION

This morning we'll check out of the hotel and meet our guide at 10AM. Today will begin our exploration of Kakheti, Georgia's wine region. This historic region, called Kakheti, is famous for its stunning landscape, independent spirit, rich fertile soil, and tiny villages specializing in wine making. Our first stop will be Alaverdi.

We'll then transfer to Telavi and Marleta Cheese Farm where we will have lunch (and a cheese tasting, of course).

After lunch, we'll explore Telavi. While the modern city has only existed since 1801, the history of the town goes back much farther – at least as far back as the 1st -2nd centuries AD, when it was a trading center on caravan routes. Walk along the fortress and be sure to stop at the Plane Tree. The 900-year old-tree is a pilgrimage site of sorts for Georgians.

Upon completion of touring, we'll arrive to our hotel for an evening at leisure.

#### EXETER SERVICES

Vehicle, Driver & Guide

#### MEALS

Breakfast & Lunch

#### HOTEL

Radisson Tsinandali



## DAY 7

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 | KAKHETI REGION

Today we will meet our guide and driver to continue exploring this beautiful region. We'll start with touring Tsinandali estate and winery, before moving on to Shumi winery.

At Shumi winery we'll experience Rtveli, one of the most important events in the country – grape harvesting for wine!

#### **Exeter Extraordinary Experience**

We'll continue with Georgian traditions at a Georgian family's home, where we will have a late lunch. A classic Georgian meal with wine and chacha will be served. Taking special pride in continuing Georgia's longstanding tradition of toasting and singing, evenings here are often accompanied by a bit song and dance.

Late this afternoon, transfer back to the hotel for an evening at leisure to enjoy the beautiful estate.

#### **EXETER SERVICES**

Vehicle, Driver & Guide

#### **MEALS**

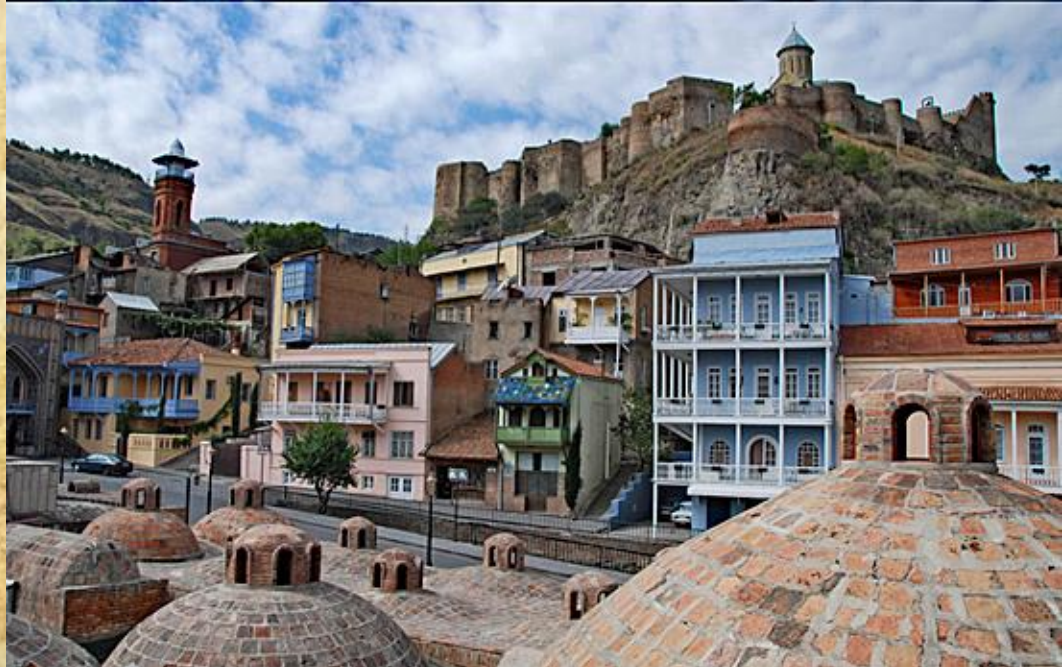
Breakfast & Late Lunch

#### **HOTEL**

Radisson Tsinandali



## DAY 8



### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 | COUNTRYSIDE EXPLORATION & RETURN TO TBILISI

Morning check out of hotel to meet our guide at 10AM. We'll visit Bodbe Monastery and the environs before visiting the quaint town of Sighnaghi.

For lunch, we will visit one of the best traditional wineries in the region, Pheasant's Tears. Georgia is considered to be the cradle of winemaking as archaeological finds suggest that wine production may have begun here as early as 6,000 BC, long before it reached the Mediterranean and Western Europe. We will meet with a local wine expert and taste some regionally produced wines.

This afternoon we will visit Sighnaghi – a small but extremely charming town which is a must-see in this part of the country. The perfectly preserved Old Town with narrow streets and 18th Century fortifications that once had 23 towers and several gates, makes for a wonderful place to stroll around and take in the relaxed ambiance and gorgeous views of the Greater Caucasus mountains.

#### **Exeter Extraordinary Experience**

Upon return to Tbilisi, we'll meet for our final farewell dinner in another of our favorite restaurants.

#### **EXETER SERVICES**

Vehicle, Driver & Guide

#### **MEALS**

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

#### **HOTEL**

Stamba



## DAY 9



## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 | DEPART TBILISI

Today we say goodbye to Georgia. Meet your driver for a private transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

### EXETER SERVICES

Departure transfer

### MEALS

Breakfast



# WHAT IS INCLUDED



**Tour Cost:**  
**\$8,500 per person based on double occupancy**  
**Single Supplement: \$1,600**

## Accommodations

### Tbilisi

**Four (4) night** at Stamba Hotel; *Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.*

Housed in a former industrial publishing house, Stamba Hotel perfectly mixes its brutalist architecture with Art-Deco design and contemporary touches. Adding unique elements like custom designed wallpaper from a local artist and living botanical walls to create a softness perfectly at play with the light offered from the high ceilings typical of buildings lining the hotel's Soviet era street. In the rooms, exposed brickwork mingles with brass bathtubs and floor-to-ceiling bookshelves to create an industrial design that feels light.

The hotel also features a café that offers traditional dishes and a breakfast buffet that will quickly become a guest favorite. Afternoon pick-me-ups are available via a delightful selection of in house chocolates and coffee at Chocolaterie and Roastery.

The hotel offers guests a spa, fitness center, and complimentary wi-fi. In the summer months, the hotel host events in its outdoor space.

### Borjomi

**Two (2) nights** at the Crowne Plaza Borjomi; *Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.*

Located in the heart of Borjomi, this modern styled hotel offers a comfortable spot to relax. It offers a spa and wellness center, as well as a swimming pool and spa baths in the hotel garden. Rooms are designed in contemporary patterns and color schemes providing a calming feel. Add in the complimentary This Works pillow spray, guests are sure to enjoy a peaceful night's sleep.

Guests can enjoy sweeping views of the park and river from the hotel's terraces and balconies. The true pleasure in a stay at the Crowne Plaza Borjomi is the extensive spa offerings. All guests enjoy complimentary access to the main spa facilities with the option to upgrade to a private treatment or specialty room. Rooms feature complimentary Wi-Fi and air conditioning.

## **Kakheti/Tsinandali**

**Two (2) nights** at the Radisson Collection Tsinandali Estate; *Tax and Breakfast included daily.*

One of only a handful of hotels in Radisson's Collection Brand, the newly opened Tsinandali Estate hotel is setting a new standard of hotel in this developing region. Located on the Tsinandali Estate in the Kakheti Region, guests can enjoy views over the Caucasus Mountains and walks along the exquisite grounds.

The hotel has three distinct restaurants, ranging from a casual bistro to a more formal setting. Guests can also enjoy a smoothie, coffee, or cocktail at one of the four lounges and bars – you can even enjoy a wine tasting of the estate wines at Gaumarjos.

Other hotel services include a health and fitness center, spa, and swimming pool.

## **Meals**

Breakfast is included daily in your hotel's restaurant. All other meals are included as noted in the itinerary. Included lunches are generally two courses with coffee, tea and mineral water. Included dinners are three courses with coffee, tea, mineral water and house beer or up to two glasses of wine.

## **Services**

Private vehicle, driver and guide at your service as described. Exeter International's local offices are available for your assistance 24 hours per day while you are traveling. Our local staff may also assist you with restaurant reservations and purchasing of additional theater and museum tickets at your request.

## **Transfers**

All transfers to and from airports and train stations are included in the program.

## **Guides**

Hand chosen for their knowledge on local history, art & architecture. Guides are at your disposal as noted in your itinerary.

## **Tickets**

All entrance tickets as described in the program, when you are accompanied by your Exeter guide. First class train tickets are included as noted in the itinerary.

## **Gratuities**

Our guides and drivers are our finest resources. They cannot wait to show you the cities they love and will truly enrich your travel experience. We have included our minimum suggested gratuity in the program costs. Any additional gratuities are at your discretion.



# EXETER INFORMATION



## Exeter International Travel Information

### BAGGAGE

The vehicles reserved for our group itinerary can accommodate up to two medium-sized suitcases per person. There are times during your touring, where you may have to handle your own luggage. Please pack accordingly. On the whole, touring during the day is causal in nature.

### SIGHTSEEING

Sightseeing arrangements have been made with care to create the best experience possible. Your drivers and guides are at your disposal as indicated in the itinerary. Within those time and mileage guidelines, you are free to modify your program as you please. Should you require additional time or mileage, the costs will be quoted on request and may be paid for locally in the local currency or U.S. Dollars.

Every effort has been made to confirm that scheduled sightseeing venues will be open at the time you plan to visit them. However, individual estates, museums, gardens and other points of interest can change their hours of operation at short notice. In the event that a particular attraction is closed on the day or time of your visit, your guide will offer alternative arrangements or rearrange your sightseeing to accommodate these unexpected events.

### OPTIONAL EXPENSES

Charges for extra meals, transport, sightseeing services or other optional additions to your established itinerary are your responsibility and must be paid locally in the local currency.

### DINING WITH YOUR GUIDE

On days when dinner and lunch costs have not been included in your itinerary (or in your tour cost), you may, at your discretion, choose to invite your guide to dine with your party. You are under no obligation to do so but, if you do extend such an invitation, the guide is your guest and you will be responsible for the cost of his/her meal.

## Booking Conditions

### PAYMENTS

Exeter International must receive a deposit of 25% of the total program cost before reservations for your independent travel program can be initiated. The balance of payment is due 60 days prior to departure. *No reservations are made on your behalf until this deposit has been received.* Availability and pricing is subject to change until this deposit is received. **All deposits are nonrefundable.**

## CANCELLATION

Written cancellations received fewer than 60 days prior to departure are subject to the following forfeit of tour cost

- 59-15 days prior to departure, 50% of total tour cost
- 14 or less days prior to departure, 100% of tour cost

## REFUNDS

We regret that refunds cannot be issued for arrangements confirmed on your itinerary but unused once your tour has begun.

## INSURANCE

Exeter International strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance to protect your investment. You will find insurance costs noted on your invoice and insurance coverage information in your original booking packet.

## PRICES AND ARRANGEMENTS

The tour price includes planning, handling and operational charges. Rates are quoted in US Dollars on the current rate of exchange and tariff as of 2022. Exeter International reserves the right to increase tour prices to cover increased costs, tariffs and taxes, and to reflect fluctuations in foreign exchange markets. Devaluation of a foreign currency will be weighed against any tariff increases imposed. Exeter International does not breakdown costs involved in any Small Group or Individual Travel Program.

*All arrangements are subject to availability and modification if necessary.  
Prices are subject to change if necessary until paid in full.*

**Exeter International**

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