

Baku Pre-Tour 2023

Small Group Tour



ITINERARY OUTLINE

DAY 1 – September 12 - Arrive in Baku

Arrive today in Baku, Azerbaijan. *(Note: Cost of flight is not included in the program cost.)* Meet your private driver just past baggage claim and customs in the arrival hall. Transfer to your hotel and check in.

This afternoon, meet your guide and driver in the lobby of the hotel. You'll visit the fascinating eternal burning hill, Yanar Dag that is fueled by natural gas escaping from the rocks and earth. This area, 30 minutes from Baku, has been endlessly burning for five decades, flames sprouting straight from the earth. The Ateshgah Temple, a 15-minute drive away is a must see. Also known as the Temple of the Fire Worshippers, this has been a center of worship for thousands of years and is one of the finest preserved temples of its kind. The temple is built on the site of a natural gas vent believed to have been sacred to the Zoroastrians since the 6th Century. The area is so saturated with natural gas and oil that flames spontaneously erupt from the ground - hence the country's other name, Odlar Yurdu, or "Land of Fires", and the name of the temple, which means "Home of Fire".

After, return to Baku where you'll have a Welcome Dinner to celebrate the start of your travels together.

- Exeter Services: Airport Transfer; Vehicle, Driver & Guide
- Meals: Welcome Dinner

Overnight: Four Seasons Baku

DAY 2 – September 13 – Baku

Meet your guide in the hotel lobby this morning and set off for an orientation walk through the Old Town. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Old Town is one of the oldest continuously inhabited parts in the region. Archaeological digs have revealed Bronze Age burial chambers, dating back 1,500 years. This is the most popular area of the city, a maze of alleys, winding streets and caravanserais sometimes called the 'Acropolis of Baku.' You'll see carpet shops and cafes and you shouldn't miss a stop into a tea house to sample hot lavash bread pulled straight from the clay oven.



Continue on to the Walled City of Baku and the Shirvanshah's Palace. The walls are well preserved and date from the 12th century whilst the Palace was built in the 15th century. While many of the treasures that were once the pride of Baku were taken by the Ottomans to Istanbul, you can still feel the history of the palace when wandering from the residential areas to the baths, through the mosque and beyond. Here in Old Town, you'll also see the Maiden Tower, hear its sad history, and if still open for the day, climb to the top for a wonderful panoramic view.

After a stop for lunch, you will visit a top Baku highlight, the Aliyev Cultural Center. Zaha Hadid, the world-famous architect and Pritzker Architecture Prize winner, saved one of her greatest triumphs for Baku in the Aliyev Cultural Center. Stunning inside and out, this building houses temporary exhibitions as well as a museum dedicated to Heydar Aliyev, the founder and first president of modern-day Azerbaijan.

Exeter Extraordinary Experience

Next, enjoy a private visit to the former house of the Nobel family. Ludwig, Robert and Emmanuel Nobel moved from St. Petersburg to Baku in the 1870s, originally to develop business in lumber. The first industrial output of oil in the world was in Baku in 1848 - five years before Pennsylvania. The Nobel brothers ended up in the oil business and they became the catalyst for the Russian tsar to decree that the development of oil was no longer a monopoly, and so the first oil boom started. Following your tour, you will enjoy a decadent caviar and champagne tasting in the lovely gardens outside.

Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

- Exeter Service: Vehicle, Driver & Guide
- Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Overnight: Four Seasons Baku

DAY 3 – September 14 – Carpet Museum & Time at Leisure

This morning your guide will take you to the Baku Carpet Museum which boasts one of the greatest carpet collections in the world. The collection is so vast that only 10% of it used to be displayed in its former home. This unique museum was built in the center of the city by an Austrian architect who designed the building to resemble a rolled carpet! It's an impressive institution that tells the fascinating history of carpet making in this region.



This afternoon, enjoy some free time in Baku or, if you're interested, your guide can take you to the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. The largest museum in Azerbaijan, open to visitors in 1921, was a former home of an Azerbaijani oil magnate and philanthropist.

- Exeter Services: Vehicle, Driver & Guide
- Meals: Breakfast

Overnight: Four Seasons Baku

DAY 4 – September 15 – Depart for Georgia

Check out of your hotel and meet your driver for your transfer to the airport for your onward flight to Tbilisi. *(Note: Cost of flight is not included in the program cost.)*

- Exeter Services: Airport Departure Transfer
- Meals: Breakfast

COST AND TERMS

TOUR PRICE: \$3500 per person based on double occupancy
 \$1000 single supplement

INCLUDED

- Accommodations as listed based on double occupancy; tax and breakfast included.
- Meals, as noted.
- Itinerary planning and design of the tour according to the exact needs of the traveler.
- Logistical recommendations and help with decisions on every aspect of the timing of the trip, including routing, museum openings, national holidays, etc.
- All pre-planned touring, transfers, a private vehicle where noted, top English-speaking guides where noted, entrance fees to all museums in the program.
- Recommended restaurant list for each destination; full listing of theater events for each destination; recommended reading list.
- Choice of final documents via AXUS or electronic travel documents.
- 24-hour local emergency contact in each destination, staffed by our local English-speaking manager.

NOT INCLUDED

- Air.
- Gratuities.
- Any personal expenses at the hotels or elsewhere.
- Optional trip cancellation insurance.
- COVID testing, as/if required.
- Upgraded rooms or suites at all hotels.
- Any items not listed as included.