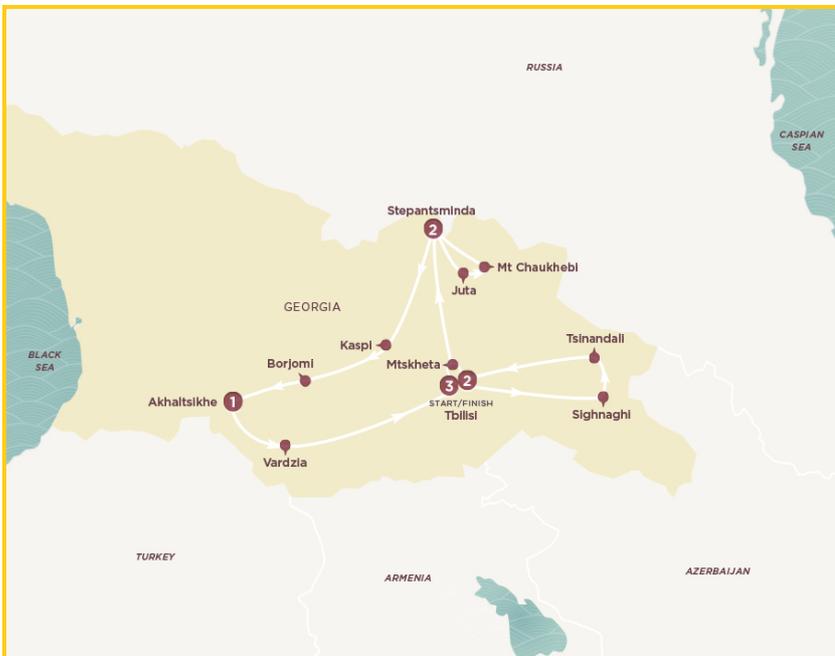


# Topdeck

## GEORGIA EXPLORER



TRIP CODE:  
EXGRTT-0

## TOPDECKER, meet Europe

This one? It's a bit different. You are too? PERFECT. Georgia Explorer is your match made in trip heaven. Join us on the road less travelled and prepare for alllllll of the remote villages. Alllllll of the one-of-a-kind cultural experiences. Alllllllll of the awesome, you-had-to-be-there moments - with some of the most excellent individuals you'll ever meet. From ancient ruins to fancy estates (and a traditional Georgian family home), this unforgettable week and a half will well and truly broaden those horizons. See you in Tbilisi.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Explorer



Nights



Android/iPhone  
app download  
info



This is a principal  
package.

# Hi, and thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

## HI, AND THANKS FOR CHOOSING TO HOLIDAY WITH TOPDECK!

You can rest assured that we'll pull out all the stops to make your trip unforgettable.

Now it's time to get excited about your holiday...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – including where to meet and what to bring. We recommend that you read these notes thoroughly so you know what to expect on your trip of a lifetime. Also, you can easily download and print this document off so you can bring it with you when you travel.

Please bear in mind that some points should be taken as a guide only – after all, everyone's different! For example, daily spending money and clothing lists can vary from one person to the next, so don't be alarmed if you don't expect to spend (or even wear) so much!

**PLEASE NOTE:** We strongly urge you to refresh this document as close to the time of your departure as possible to ensure you have the most up-to-date accommodation list and information available.

### ON THE BUCKET LIST (INCLUDED)

- + Walking tour of Tbilisi
- + Walking tour of Mtskheta
- + Visit Ananuri castle complex
- + Scenic walk to Gergeti Trinity Church
- + Visit the remote village of Juta
- + Winemaking demonstration and tasting in Kaspi
- + Visit the spa town of Borjomi
- + Visit the 'cave town' of Vardzia
- + Visit Khertvisi Fortress (entrance not included)
- + Visit the quaint town of Signaghi
- + Visit a winery in the Kakheti region
- + Lunch with a local family (including Georgian cookery lesson)
- + Visit the estate of Prince Alexander Chavchavadze

### MORE INCLUSIONS

- + Walking tour of Tbilisi
- + Walking tour of Mtskheta
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YOUR TRIP WILL  
START

YOUR TRIP WILL  
FINISH

## TRIP CURRENCIES

- + Georgia - GEL

**PICK UP:**

Tbilisi  
Georgia

**DROP OFF:**

Tbilisi  
Georgia



# YOUR ITINERARY



AWESOME  
TRIP  
LEADER

## DAY 1 | TBILISI, GEORGIA

Welcome. To. Colour. Love breaking the mould, defying the norm, doing things differently? Tbilisi is your place. Picture it: breathtaking valley setting. Kaleidoscopic architecture. Unbelievable bars and nightlife. Check into your hotel, drop your bags and go exploring. We've got your dinner covered tonight.



### MEALS:

+ Dinner

## DAY 2 | TBILISI

Time to get versed in all things Tbilisian (yep, it's a word). Point yourself in the direction of the 13th-century Metekhi Church and prepare to swell your brain with some serious local knowledge. On today's walking tour, we'll take on the terrace-like old districts of the city - so expect colourful houses, patterned balconies and INCREDIBLE views. Case in point? The panoramic vistas from the 4th-century Narikala Fortress (they'll drop your jaw). Before we head back towards the hotel, we'll check out the sulphur bath area. Fact: the old Georgian word 'tbili' means 'warm'. Makes sense.



### MEALS:

+ Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

+ Walking tour of Tbilisi

## DAY 3 | TBILISI

DAY TRIP: Mtskheta is just a 40-minute drive away, so it'd be rude not to. This 3,000-year-old city was once the capital of Georgia, and it's chock-full of ancient architectural wonders. Today we'll get the lowdown on the UNESCO-listed Jvari Monastery and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (where the Robe of Christ is buried) from a local guide. Tonight: back to Tbilisi. Go techno at Bassiani or KHIDI, or snag yourself a Georgian tippie at Wine Buffet (sophis).



### MEALS:

+ Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

+ Walking tour of Mtskheta

## DAY 4 | TBILISI TO STEPANTSMINDA

Today: not-your-average road trip up the Georgian Military Highway. Featuring: not-your-average pit stop (aka the 17th-century Ananuri castle complex). The carvings on the churches here are amazingly intricate, FYI – and the whole shebang overlooks the stunning Zhinvali reservoir. Take a look around, then it's back on the road again, winding through the gorgeous Caucasus Mountains to the town of Stepantsminda. Like a hike? This one's a peach. Grab some water and a snack, 'cause we're off through the valleys and woodlands on a two-and-a-half-hour expeditious to Gergeti Trinity Church. If the weather's on our side, we might even see Mt Kazbegi (an extra-high glacier) along the way. Back in Stepantsminda, there's a dumpling-themed cookery class to get into if you're keen.



### MEALS:

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

+ Visit Ananuri castle complex

+ Scenic walk to Gergeti Trinity Church



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

+ Khinkali (Georgian dumpling)  
cookery class

## DAY 5 | STEPANTSMINDA

Juta, we're coming for you - through the gorgeous Sno Valley (we know, it sounds like a Mario Kart racetrack). But what is Juta? Good question tbh. It's a tiny little mountain village that's cut off from the rest of the world for most of the year. Think: lush, green, soul-soothing landscapes. Hit up a café, try a local tea, say hey to the cows and horses, then hop back on the coach to Stepantsminda. Dinner's waiting back at the hotel.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit the remote village of Juta

## DAY 6 | STEPANTSMINDA TO AKHALTSIKHE

Next up: Kaspi, where we've got a wine tasting to get stuck into. Red or white, the local stuff is made in large earthenware jugs called kvevri (a method that's so legit Georgian, it's on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list). After we've sunk a couple, it's onwards to Borjomi - a spa town that's famous as the birthplace of the eponymous (we know, we're wordsmiths) mineral water. Head out and find a cool place for lunch, then it's off to Akhaltsikhe for the evening.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Winemaking demonstration and tasting in Kaspi
- + Visit the spa town of Borjomi

## DAY 7 | AKHALTSIKHE TO TBILISI

This is a special one. Remember the name Vardzia, 'cause it's gonna be your new favourite place. Two words: CAVE CITY. This incredible complex of caverns and tunnels stretches for over half a kilometre -and it's even got its own rock-carved church, the Church of the Dormition (which is full of unbelievable Golden Age frescoes). Take some time to wander the meeting rooms, reception chambers and wine cellars (there are a lot of them) before we move on. Next stop, Khertvisi Fortress - one of the oldest fortresses in the country. Tonight, it's back to Tbilisi. Ready for round two?



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit the 'cave town' of Vardzia
- + Visit Khertvisi Fortress (entrance not included)

## DAY 8 | TBILISI

Kakheti region, coming up. YES – it's another winemaking area. And YES – it's a warm and friendly kinda place. Think: snow-capped mountains meet fertile valleys. On the to do list? The photogenic town of Signaghi (feels like you're in Tuscany, right?) and a winery (for another round of tippie time). Then: prepare for a deep-dive into Georgian culture as we settle down for lunch with a local family – including delicious homemade food, wine and Georgian chacha (that's 'brandy' to you and me). Plus: we'll get a lesson in Georgian cookery with a bit of Churchkela sweet-making AND a Shoti bread-baking demo (complete with traditional thone oven). But that's not all. To round things off we'll get a wriggle on to Tsinandali – where we'll pay a visit to the estate of Prince Alexander Chavchavadze (which was a hotspot for poets and creative types back in the 19th century). Back in Tbilisi there's one more group dinner to look forward to. Make it count!



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch
- + Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit the quaint town of Signaghi
- + Visit a winery in the Kakheti region
- + Lunch with a local family (including Georgian cookery lesson)
- + Visit the estate of Prince Alexander Chavchavadze

## DAY 9 | TBILISI

It's the end of the road (for now). Where to next?



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast

## MEALS

Your included meals are detailed in the 'Included Essentials' section of this document.

Breakfasts (usually continental breakfasts) are included every day, except on the first morning of your trip. A typical continental breakfast may consist of cereals with milk or yogurt, bread, croissants, cold meats, and cheese – with fruit juice, tea or coffee to drink. It is rare to get a hot breakfast, though on some occasions some hot food may be available.

Included meals will be provided in a mixture of local restaurants and places in which we stay. In most cases, table water is provided with meals. If you wish to purchase additional drinks, you can do so at your own expense.

If you have any dietary requirements, we'll make every effort to cater to your needs – as long as you advise your travel agent or Customer Service Consultant when you book. You can also make a note of dietary requirements in the Topdeck app when you check-in.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although we'll do everything in our power to cater to your needs, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in every restaurant we visit. We also cannot cater to tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

# TIPPING

## NO TIP NECESSARY

Your Topdeck Trip Leaders and Drivers never expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. We also know how much tipping can cost you. So go ahead – spoil yourself with the money you save traveling with us (just don't forget Mum's souvenir).

# TOPDECK TRAVEL APP

Our app is available to download before you travel. With a range of cool features including a currency converter, budget planner, check-in tool and group chat, it'll help you plan your trip like a pro. Think of it as your very own Topdeck Trip Leader in the palm of your hand.

## TRIP GROUP CHAT

Connect with your fellow Topdeckers before you depart and begin your magical friendship in the flash of a winking face emoji.

## ITINERARY VIEWER

Get the lowdown on where you'll be going and what activities you'll be doing on each day of your trip with this handy little tool.

## CHECK-IN

Plug in all your vital deets and we'll keep them safe for when you really need them. Making your life easier, one swipe at a time.

## BUDGET TRACKER

Keep an eye on your holiday spending, leaving you with more FUN-ds to play with. Think: elaborate Spanish feasts (not questionable supermarket sandwiches).

## MAPS

Navigate your way to meeting points and lesser-known local gems using pins dropped by your Trip Leader, seek out your own bucket list sites and take to the streets like a pro.

Once the trip is over, you'll need the app to give us feedback about your trip experience. We love to hear what you thought about your trip, as it helps to give us an idea of the things we're doing well and the things we could be doing better.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Topdeck Travel App should only be downloaded once you have booked your trip. You will not be able to log in unless you have a Topdeck booking reference number.

[GET IT FOR IPHONE](#)

[GET IT FOR ANDROID](#)



# PASSENGER SAFETY

## NIGHTS OUT

One of the best parts of travelling is experiencing the nightlife and entertainment each city has to offer. However, amidst the fun and excitement, it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety as well. Before you hit the road with us, be sure to familiarise yourself with the following safety information.

When you're on a night out, remember to avoid walking alone, particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation details so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. It's also a good idea to get your Topdeck trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking, and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

## RESPECTING FELLOW PASSENGERS

Here at Topdeck, we're all about inclusivity. We want to make sure that everyone has a great time on our trips, and that everyone feels like they're part of one happy Topdeck family.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong – that's just not what families do. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow passengers. The golden rules? Always remember to respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation and treat others how you'd wish to be treated yourself. Easy!

## DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Passengers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana, even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

**REMEMBER** – if you are found in possession of drugs, not only could you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if drugs are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you wouldn't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up again.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- + Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- + Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!
- + Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink, you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- + Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home, too – so they're sure to know of some tried-and-tested ways to beat the blues
- + Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (trust us).

## HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome holiday AND have a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- + Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your hotel towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- + Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- + Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets and book tours and activities run by local guides
- + Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- + Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

## OTHER INFORMATION

### INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

World Nomads provides comprehensive travel insurance for people from over 140 countries. For more information, visit [www.topdeck.travel/travel-insurance](http://www.topdeck.travel/travel-insurance).

### PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

### WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it! (As long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is.)

- + 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- + 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- + 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- + 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- + 4 shirts/T-shirts
- + 2 sweaters/jumpers
- + Smart casual evening wear
- + 1 rainproof jacket
- + 1 warm jacket
- + Underwear and socks
- + Swimwear
- + Towel
- + Toiletries
- + Hat and sunscreen
- + Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- + Insect repellent
- + Conversion plug
- + Reusable water bottle
- + Snow gear



**THAT'S IT!**