



TOPDECKER, meet Australasia (TD)

Is this trip for me? UNCONVENTIONAL. REMARKABLE. REWARDING.

This one? It's a bit different. You are too? PERFECT. Georgia Explorer is your match made in heaven. Head off-the-beaten-track and prepare for alllllll of the remote villages. Alllllll of the one-of-a-kind cultural experiences. Alllllll 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



Sail & Swim



Nights



Download app



Meals

Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?
The countdown's on...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

IMPORTANT: please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Walking tour of Tbilisi
- Visit Mtskheta
- Visit Ananuri Architectural Complex
- Hike to Gergeti Trinity Church
- Visit the remote village of Juta
- Wine making demonstration and tasting in Kaspi
- Visit the spa town of Borjomi
- Visit the 'cave town' of Vardzia
- Photo stop at 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



YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | TBILISI, GEORGIA

Welcome. To. Colour. Love breaking the mould, defying the norm, doing things differently? Tbilisi is your place. Picture it: breathtaking valleys. Kaleidoscopic architecture. Unbelievable bars and nightlife. Check into your hotel, drop your bags and get to know the gang. 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 also 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, 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 INCLUDING MTSKHETA

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 is 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. Back in Tbilisi, grab some dinner with the gang then hit the town. Go techno at Bassiani or KHIDI – or snag yourself a Georgian tippie at Wine Buffet (so sophis).



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Mtskheta

DAY 4 | TBILISI TO STEPANTSMINDA VIA ANANURI ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX

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 – and the whole shebang overlooks the stunning Zhinvali Reservoir. Take a look around, then we'll wind through the gorgeous Caucasus Mountains to the town of Stepantsminda. Ready to 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 Architectural Complex
- Hike to Gergeti Trinity Church



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Khinkali (Georgian dumpling) cookery class: from 5 USD

DAY 5 | STEPANTSMINDA INCLUDING JUTA

Juta, we're coming for you – through the gorgeous Sno Valley (sounds like a Mario Kart racetrack, right?). 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 mountain landscapes. Hit up a café, try the traditional herbal tea, mingle with the locals – then hop back on the coach to Stepantsminda. Dinner's waiting back at the hotel – so, dig in with the gang and see who got the best pano of the day.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the remote village of Juta

DAY 6 | STEPANTSMINDA TO AKHALTSIKHE VIA KASPI AND BORJOMI

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, it's on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list). After we've learnt our ABC's of Georgian wine – it's onwards to Borjomi: a spa town that's famous as the birthplace of the eponymous mineral water. Head out and find a local haunt for lunch, then it's off to the city of Akhaltsikhe for the evening.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Wine making demonstration and tasting in Kaspi
- Visit the spa town of Borjomi

DAY 7 | AKHALTSIKHE TO TBILISI VIA VARDZIA AND KHERTVISI FORTRESS

This is a special one. Remember the name Vardzia Cave Monastery, 'cause it's gonna be your new favourite place. This incredible complex of caverns and tunnels stretches for over half a kilometre – it's even got its own rock-carved church, the Church of the Dormition (which is full of unbelievable Golden Age frescoes). Take a wander through the meeting rooms, reception chambers and wine cellars before we head to 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
- Photo stop at Khertvisi Fortress (entrance not included)

DAY 8 | TBILISI INCLUDING SIGHNAGHI AND TSINANDALI

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 and a winery (for another round of tippie time). Then: prepare for a deep-dive into Georgian culture as we settle down for a delicious homemade lunch with a local family. Plus: we'll get a lesson in Georgian cookery with 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). Head down to breakfast and say goodbye to the fam. We're not crying, you are. Then? The rest is up to you – but we hear Greece is good this time of year *wink.



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.

OTHER INFORMATION

TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



YOUR SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, 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 so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your 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.

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers 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 immediately. 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 do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don'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.

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 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 (fact!)

TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

RESPECT ON THE ROAD

RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

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

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 adventure AND 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 room 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!

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.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

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's 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. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

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.

TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

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!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 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 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



THAT'S IT!