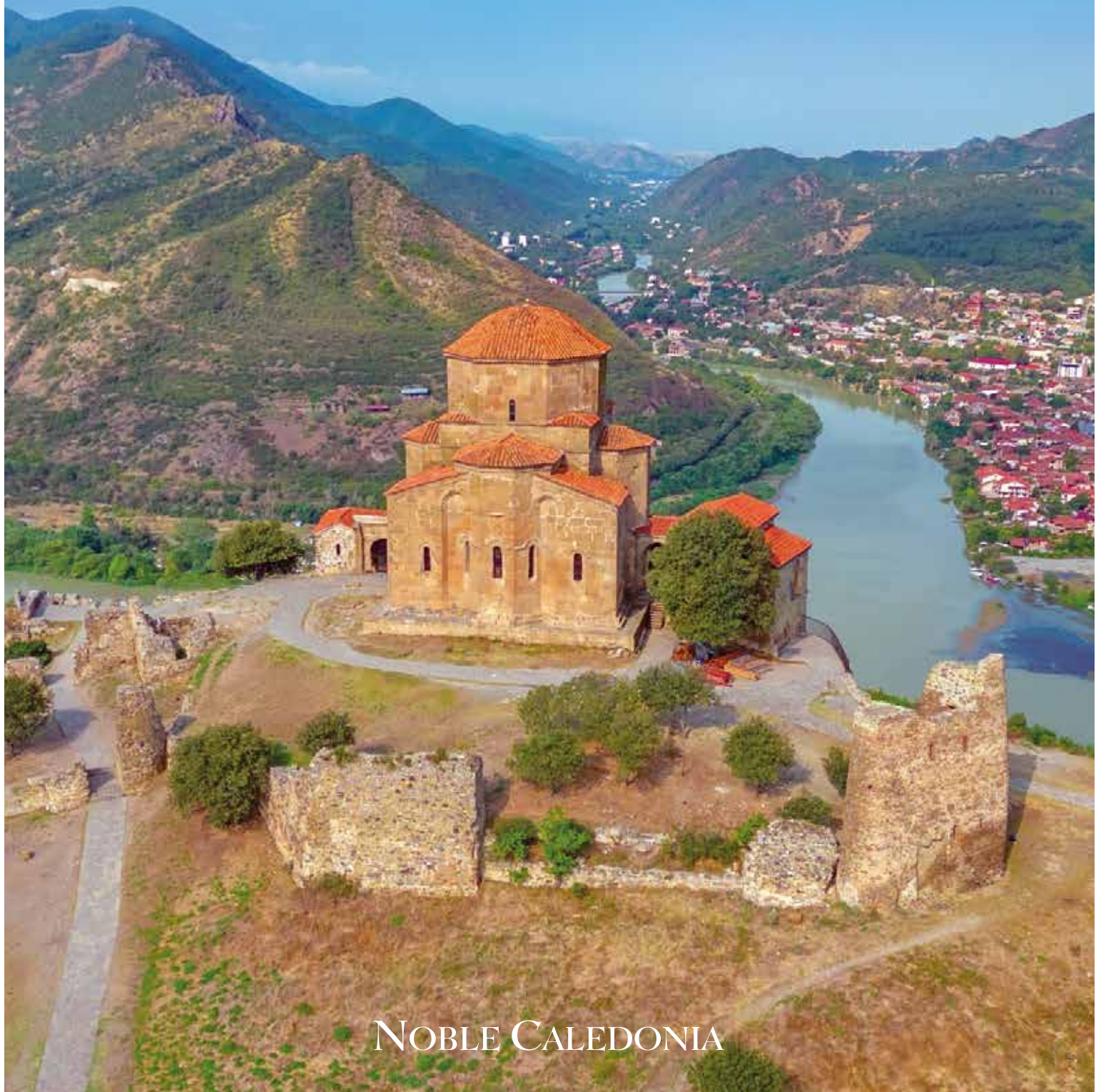


GLORIOUS GEORGIA

AN IN-DEPTH ESCORTED TOUR
VISITING THE TREASURES OF GEORGIA

8TH TO 17TH MAY & 25TH SEPTEMBER TO 4TH OCTOBER 2028



NOBLE CALEDONIA



The former Kingdom of Georgia lies to the northeast of Turkey in one of the Caucasus' most beautiful landscapes, where green valleys are carpeted with vineyards and ancient churches and watchtowers perch amid spectacular mountain scenery.

Join us for our new, nine-night escorted tour and discover the many facets of this ancient land. Beginning with four nights in the vibrant capital of Tbilisi, we will have ample time to discover one of the world's oldest settlements which is a beguiling mix of natural beauty, Medieval ruins and Soviet-era structures. From the modern capital we will journey along the famed Georgian Military Highway to Georgia's ancient capital and UNESCO World Heritage Site, Mtskheta. Following on from our time in Tbilisi, we travel west through the mountains to the charming city of Kutaisi which will be our base for three nights, and along the way we will visit Gori, Stalin's town of birth, and the remarkable rock-hewn settlement of Uplistsikhe. Whilst in Kutaisi we will explore some of the ancient and natural highlights of west Georgia including the mysterious cave cities and magnificent early Christian monuments, reminders that Georgia embraced Christianity as far back as the 4th century AD. Our tour will conclude with two nights in the coastal city of Batumi on the shores of the Black Sea.



Georgia's long and often turbulent history is one of invasions and yet the country has survived with its own unique identity and a wonderful heritage of architecture and arts. Despite the long years of Soviet occupation, it is a country moving forward in the 21st century with an ever-improving tourist infrastructure and for our stay we have selected a range of comfortable four-star hotels based on their locations. The road surfaces are not always perfect and some of the travel distances long, but there is very little traffic and beautiful scenery to admire as we journey along.

We do hope that you can join us for what promises to be a fascinating tour of this beautiful country known for its warm hospitable people, delicious food and wealth of cultural and historic treasures on offer.

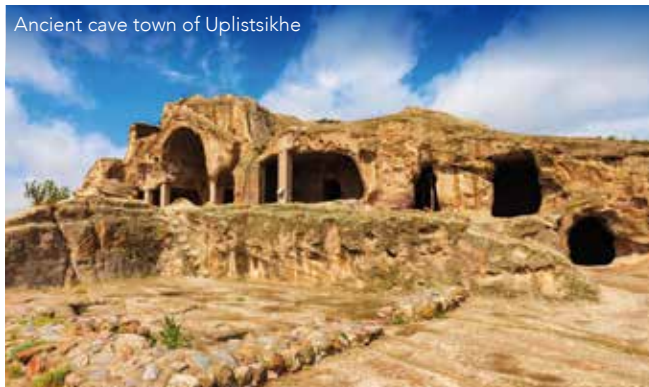
The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Tbilisi, Georgia. Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this afternoon in Tbilisi and transfer to our hotel for our four-night stay.

Day 2 Tbilisi. This morning we will set out to explore the vibrant city of Tbilisi, the heart of Georgia. Squeezed between mountain ranges, the city fills the Mtkvari Valley and, having been the capital of Georgia for more than 1,500 years, it has a rich and diverse history that has created a melting pot of cultures. We will start with a walking tour of the Old Town where over the centuries different cultures and peoples have laid down their roots. We will visit the Metekhi Church of the Assumption, a wonderful example of Georgian Orthodox architecture, the Georgian Synagogue and the Anchiskhati Basilica, the oldest surviving church in the city, as well as see the famous sulphur baths. From here we will visit Narikhala Fortress, the city's main citadel, with wonderful views over Tbilisi. After lunch in a local restaurant, the afternoon is at leisure to relax at the hotel or continue exploring the city independently. We will meet in the evening for dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 3 Mtskheta. Today's drive takes us north along the famed Georgian Military Highway. Our first stop is in sacred Mtskheta, the ancient capital of eastern Georgia. We will visit several of its historic monuments including the beautiful 6th century Church of Jvari perched on a cliff overlooking the city, and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the first Christian church in Georgia. Lunch today will be at a local winery where we will try khinkali, the traditional Georgian dumplings and can even attempt making some, accompanied by a tasting of the local Georgian wines. We will return to Tbilisi in the late afternoon. (B, L, D)

Day 4 Tbilisi. After breakfast we will continue our exploration of Tbilisi. We will start the morning at the Holy Trinity Cathedral before transferring to the National Museum of Georgia, where we can explore its Treasury exhibition spanning from 3000 BC to the 19th century. Highlights include displays of gold jewellery, ceramics and weaponry. Before lunch we will enjoy an aperitif at the Elene Akhvediani House Museum. Elene Akhvediana was one of Georgia's most notable fine art painters of



Ancient cave town of Uplistsikhe



Gelati Monastery, Kutaisi



Gonio Fortress



Batumi Botanical Garden



Narikhala Fortress

the 20th century. Her studio was used as a salon for poetry readings and concerts and was converted into a museum after her death. It houses thousands of items from her life and artworks, and is a wonderful example of a traditional Georgian house. Lunch will be at a local restaurant with the remainder of the afternoon and evening at leisure. (B, L)

Day 5 Tbilisi to Kutaisi. This morning we will leave the lovely city of Tbilisi behind and set forth into the mountains. Our first stop along the way will be Gori, known as the birthplace of Josef Stalin. Here we will visit the Stalin Museum where you can see the house where he was born and his personal railway carriage. We continue to nearby Uplistsikhe, an ancient cave town dating from the first half of the 1st millennium BC. The entire town is a complex of rock-cut streets, residences, early churches, secret tunnels, water passages, markets and the oldest theatre in Georgia. This afternoon we arrive into Kutaisi, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Colchis and Georgia's third-largest city, and check into our hotel for our three night stay. (B, L, D)

Day 6 Kutaisi. Today we will explore Kutaisi which is known to have existed as early as the 7th century BC as a town in the Greek colony of Miletus. It was its enviable position that allowed it to flourish as an important trade centre on the caravan route from Greece to India. We will see the Bagrati Cathedral, the 11th century cathedral built during the reign of King Bagrat III and known as the "symbol of a united Georgia", and visit the Gelati Monastery. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was founded in 1106 by the famous King of Georgia, David the Builder, and the Gelati Complex includes an academy that has preserved a great number of manuscripts dating back to the 12th century. We will also visit the Sataplia Cave where preserved dinosaur footprints have been uncovered. (B, L, D)

Day 7 Kutaisi. Our first call today will be at the Prometheus Caves, a 1.2-kilometre-long cave complex featuring breathtaking examples of stalactites, stalagmites, petrified waterfalls, underground rivers and lakes which, we will explore by small boat. Afterwards we will drive the short distance to Martvili, a stunning combination of unique natural wonders and historical monuments. We return to Kutaisi for an evening at leisure. (B, L)

Day 8 Kutaisi to Batumi. After breakfast in the hotel we will drive to the port city of Batumi, located on the Black Sea. Its seaside location, with a sweeping corniche, a backdrop of mountains and 19th century architecture, makes it very different from any other place in the country. Batumi existed as a small town as far back as the time of the Greeks when it was known as one of the Black Sea's principal ports, and then under the Ottomans, but it was under the Russians that it grew in both

size and importance and became the Black Sea outlet for oil from the Caspian. We will visit the Batumi Botanical Garden, set over 111 hectares, with views of the Black Sea and made up of plants from as far afield as New Zealand, Australia, Himalaya, East Asia and South America. We continue to the old city and wander the streets seeing Piazza Square, the statue of Medea and Seaside Park. Check in to our hotel this afternoon for our two night stay and meet for dinner this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 9 Batumi. The Autonomous Republic of Ajara, in which Batumi lies, is in the extreme southwest of Georgia on the border with Turkey. Twelfth century bridges and religious constructions from the time of Queen Tamar have survived and we will visit Gonio, the fortress-city of the early Feudal period, which towers majestically over the surrounding area. Gonio Fortress is closely connected to the myth of the Argonauts. According to the legend, this is the site where King Ayetes buried his son Apsytus, who was killed by Jason. Return to the hotel and enjoy the afternoon at leisure to explore at your own pace before we meet for a farewell dinner this evening. (B, D)

Day 10 Batumi to London. After breakfast in the hotel we will transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London via Istanbul. Arrive this afternoon. (B)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: £3995

Single: £4795

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Four nights at the Swissotel Tbilisi • Three nights at the New Port Hotel in Kutaisi • Two nights at the Radisson Blu in Batumi • Meals as indicated (B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner) • Wine, beer & soft drinks with included lunches & dinners • Excursions as described • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Group Size: We are restricting the group size to just 25 participants.

NB: Some of the excursions will involve extended periods of walking including steps and over uneven terrain. We therefore do not recommend this tour for those with walking difficulties. Please also note that we will be staying at a number of different hotels as travelling long distances is required to visit the country's main highlights.



Holy Trinity Cathedral, Tbilisi

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Jvari Monastery, Mtskheta.