

## Friends' Trip to Georgia

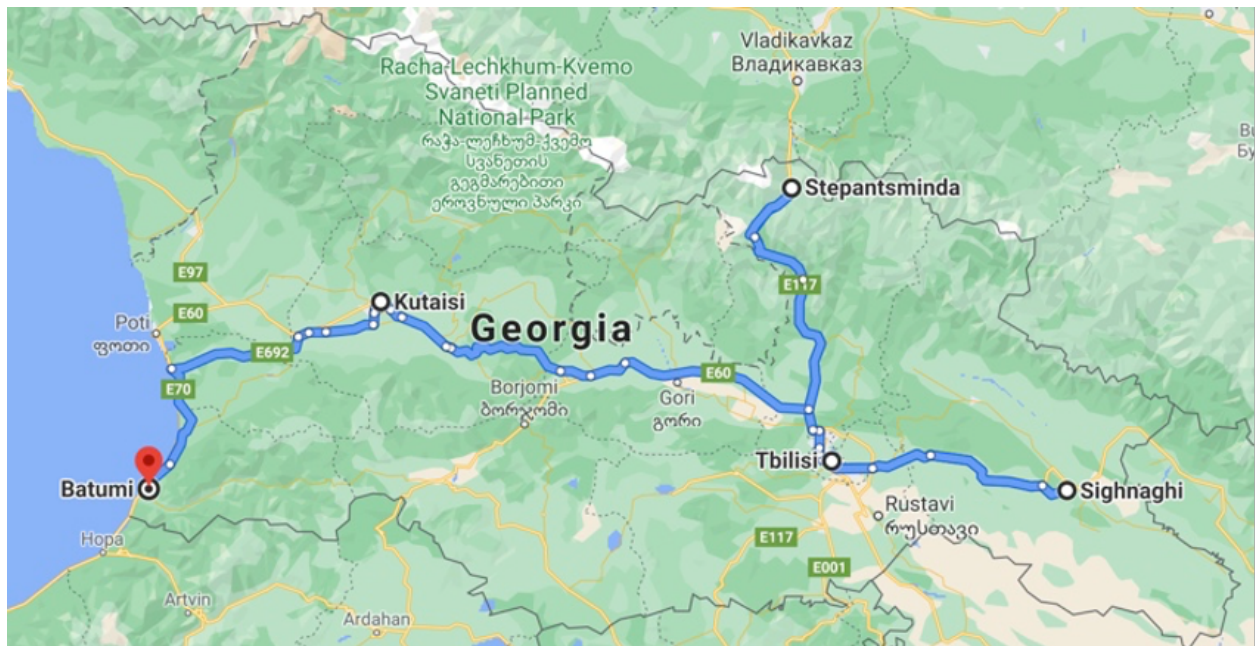



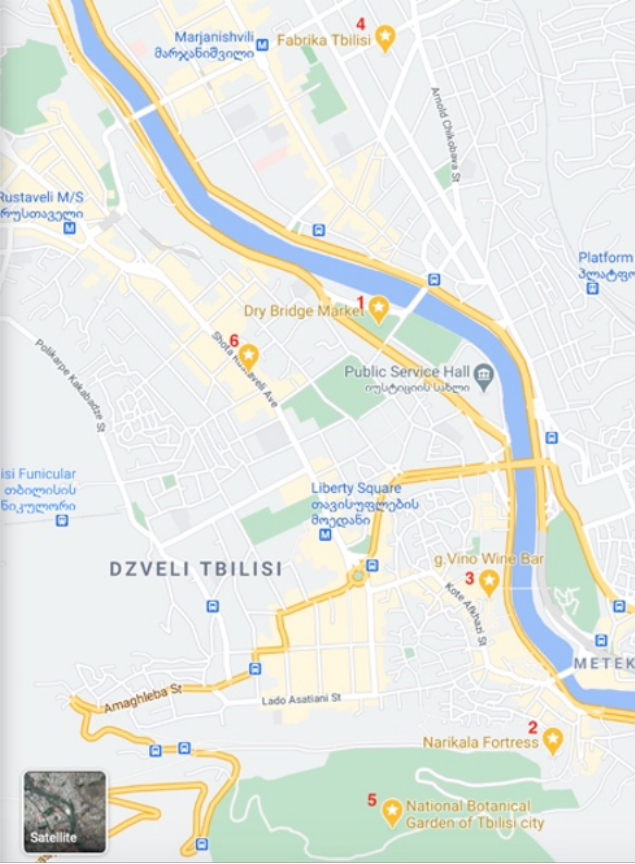





### Brief:

- One week to explore the country of Georgia (25 June- 1 August)
- Ideal to see a mix of city, mountains, and sea
- Will rent a car as primary means of getting around
- Preference to have some non-travel days
- Looking for an informal agenda so that we can approach each day with what we're feeling in the moment

### General Things to Keep in Mind:

- 3 GEL (lari) = 1 USD
  - Expect to pay 50-100 USD/day for medium standard of travel
- Recommend picking up a SIM card in the airport
- Country is safe and hospitable
- Bring a skirt and head scarf to enter religious buildings


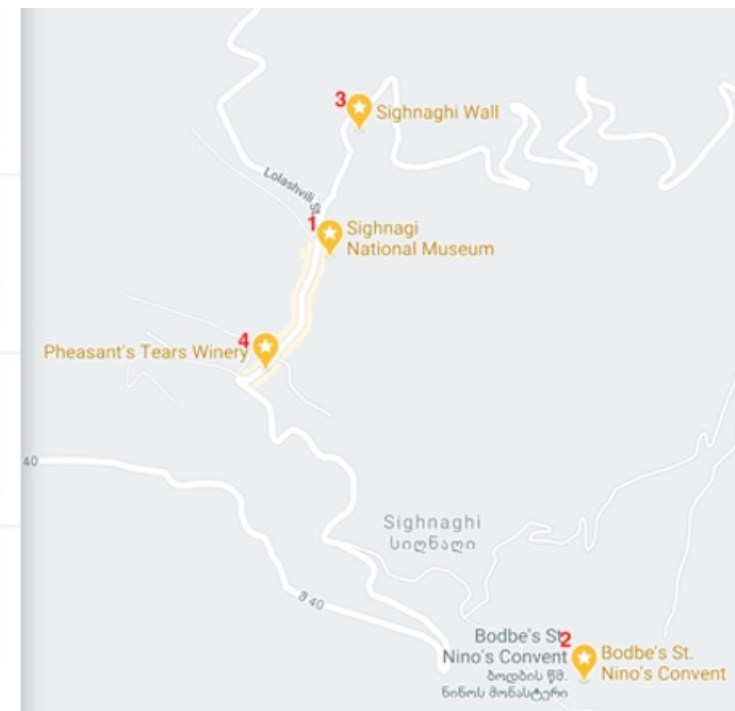





<p><b>Dry Bridge Market</b> 1 4.5 ★★★★★ (4,891) Flea market Popular flea market for eclectic goods Open until 17:00</p>		
<p><b>Narikala Fortress</b> 2 4.7 ★★★★★ (5,523) Fortress Scenic ruins of a centuries-old fort</p>		
<p><b>g.Vino Wine Bar</b> 3 4.6 ★★★★★ (560) \$\$ · Restaurant · 6 Ekerle II st, 6 Ekerle II St</p> <p>✓ Dine-in · ✓ Takeaway · ✗ Delivery</p>		
<p><b>Fabrika Tbilisi</b> 4 <span style="float: right;">PLN 87</span> 4.6 ★★★★★ (8,086) 2-star hotel Hip hostel in a former sewing factory Free Wi-Fi</p>		
<p><b>National Botanical Garden of Tbilisi city</b> 5 4.6 ★★★★★ (7,850) Botanical garden · 12 Bambis Rigi Street Botanical garden with elevated views Open until 18:30</p>		
<p><b>Shota Rustaveli Ave</b> 6 4.9 ★★★★★ (18)</p>		

**Saturday, 25 June: arrive at 3:55am in Tbilisi**

*Check into your hotel and catch up on sleep as long as you need. Once you're up spend the rest of the day exploring the city. Taking a walking tour is a great way to orient yourself, then spend some time relaxing at one of the bath houses. Old Town is a great hub; it is not only a great sightseeing spot in its own right, but it also many of the top attractions are located within or are walking distance from Old Town:*







- You can book a free tour at: <https://tbilisifreewalkingtours.com>
- Sulphur bathhouses in Abanotubani (in Old Town)- There are lots of option, but I recommend going to Gulo's Thermal Spa for the best authentic experience.
  - If you want to check out some others, I recommend this website for an overview of the 5 best bathhouses: <https://wander-lush.org/tbilisi-georgia-gulos-thermal-spa-abanotubani-sulfur-bath-review/>
- Hike up hill to Narikala Fortress & Mother of Georgia Statue (10 minute walk from the baths)
- National Botanical Gardens- not only great for their natural beauty but also offers great views of the city.
- Dry Bridge Flea Market is a cool spot to pick up a non-traditional souvenir.
- Rustaveli Avenue is a great spot to walk along to find shops and restaurants.
- Fabrika is a former sewing factory that is now considered the hip spot to eat and shop.
- Recommended winery: G. Vino is a natural wine bar that also serves Georgian cuisine that they pair with the drinks. It's a great stop to unwind and eat after walking around all day.

<p><b>Sighnagi National Museum</b> 1            4.6 ★★★★★ (589)            Local history museum ·            8 Rustaveli blind-Alley, Sighnagi            Open until 18:00</p>		
<p><b>Bodbe's St. Nino's Convent</b> 2            4.8 ★★★★★ (2,658)            Cathedral · Sighnagi-St. Nino Monastery            9th-century Georgian Orthodox monastery            Open until 17:00</p>		
<p><b>Sighnagi Wall</b> 3            4.7 ★★★★★ (1,269)            Tourist attraction</p>		
<p><b>Pheasant's Tears Winery</b> 4            3.9 ★★★★★ (221)            Winery            Qvevri-fermented wines &amp; 2 restaurants            Open until 23:00</p>		

### Sunday, 26 June: Day Trip to Sighnagi: 1.75 hours drive, one way

Drive outside of the city to see some of the cutest towns, oldest monasteries, and best wine that Georgia has. Lonely Planet considers Sighnagi “Georgia’s single most attractive town” and it’s situated in Georgia’s “premier wine-producing area.” While in this region, consider visiting:


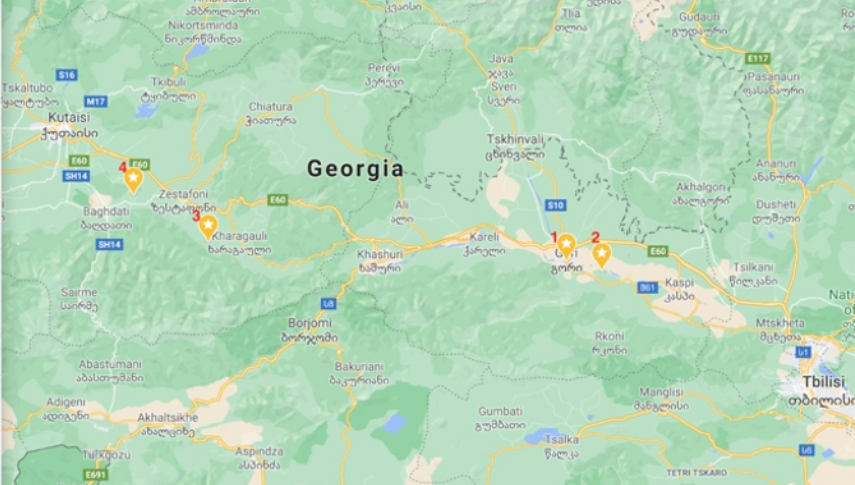



- Sighnagi city walls- climb up lookout towers for views of the surrounding towns
- Sighnagi Old Town & National Museum of History and Ethnography
- Bodbe Monastery- great views of Sighnagi, the city wall, and the valley and some of the best grounds of any monastery in Georgia
- Recommended lunch spot: Pheasant’s Tears offers meals made from local organic produce and top-class natural wines. You can stop by for a meal or get a full tour

<p><b>Mt Kazbek</b> <span style="color: red;">1</span></p> <p>4.8 ★★★★★ (418)</p> <p>Mountain peak</p> <p>Hiking &amp; climbing on an extinct volcano</p>		
<p><b>Ananuri Fortress Complex</b> <span style="color: red;">2</span></p> <p>4.6 ★★★★★ (7,289)</p> <p>Tourist attraction</p> <p>Historic riverside castle complex</p> <p>Open until 20:00</p>		
<p><b>Dariali Gorge</b> <span style="color: red;">3</span></p> <p>4.6 ★★★★★ (14)</p> <p>S-3</p>		
<p><b>Gudauri</b> <span style="color: red;">4</span></p> <p>Georgia</p>		
<p><b>Mtskheta</b> <span style="color: red;">5</span></p> <p>Georgia</p>		

### Monday, 27 June: Drive to Stepantsminda (3 hours)

Today you'll drive to the mountainous region of Georgia (the Caucasus Mountains). I recommend leaving Tbilisi early so that you can check out Mtskheta, Ananuri Fortress, and Gudauri along the way. Once there top attractions are Dariali Gorge and Mt. Kazbek.

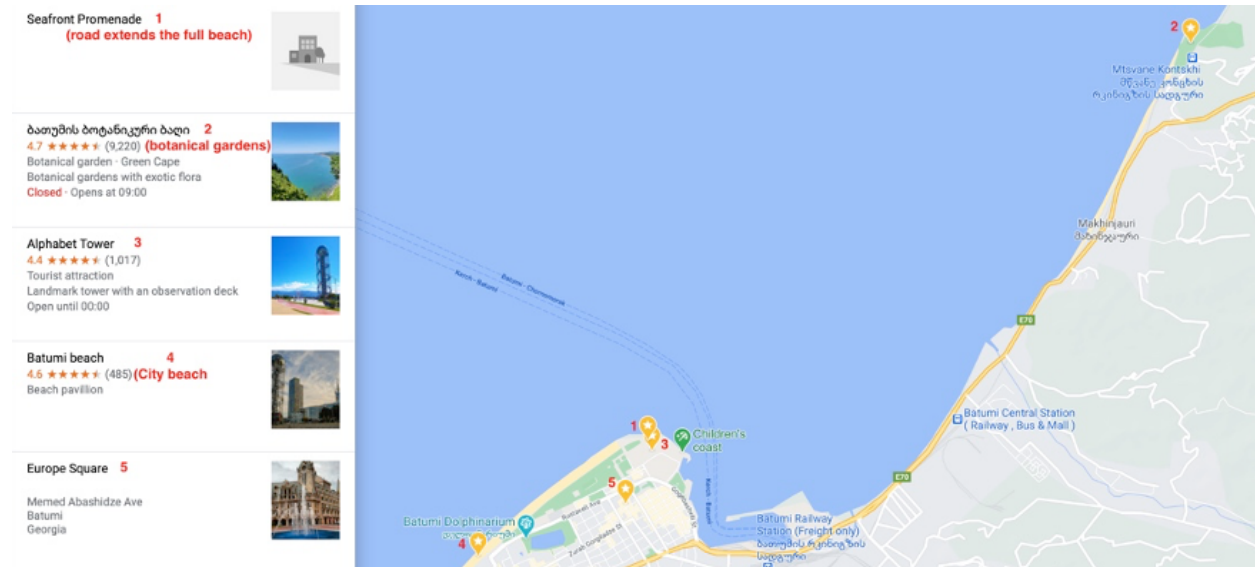
- Mtskheta is one of the oldest Georgian cities (dates back to 5<sup>th</sup> century BC). The city is a world heritage site. Top attractions are the Jvari Monastery and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral.
- Ananuri Fortress is a historical castles complex with two churches and scenic river views.
- Gudauri is a ski resort and recreational area. It's a great place to stop and stretch your legs for a little walk with great views. If you just want a short break consider stopping that the Gudauri View Point at the Russia-Georgia Friendship Monument.
- Dariali River Gorge is an 11km canyon close to the Georgian-Russian border. Ruins of an ancient fortress are still visible.
- Mt Kazbek (16,581 ft) is the third tallest mountain in Georgia, but it is still taller than any peak in mainland Europe. The streams, mountains, lakes, greenery, flowers, and wildlife make it a great hub for hiking and mountain biking.

<p><b>Gori</b> <span style="float: right;">1</span></p> <p>Georgia</p>		
<p><b>Uplistsikhe</b> <span style="float: right;">2</span></p> <p>4.8 ★★★★★ (6,035)</p> <p>Museum</p> <p>Ruins of a rock-cut Iron Age town</p> <p>Open until 17:00</p>		
<p><b>Vardzia</b> <span style="float: right;">3</span></p> <p>Georgia</p>		
<p><b>Baia's Wine</b> <span style="float: right;">4</span></p> <p>4.8 ★★★★★ (112)</p> <p>3-star hotel</p>		

## Tuesday, 28 June: Drive to Kutaisi (5.5 hours)

Get a final view of the mountains before setting out to west-central Georgia. Kutaisi is the third largest city in Georgia and houses some of the oldest settlements in Europe. It's a long driving day, but there are plenty of stops along the road to break it up. You can then take some time tomorrow morning to explore Kutaisi.

- Uplistsikhe is a 3000+ year old town built into rocks. They have found artifacts there that date back to the Bronze Age.
- Gori is the birthplace of Joseph Stalin, and you can make a stop at the Joseph Stalin Museum. The Gori Fortress is another option to check out.
- Vardzia is another fortress town. The town is made of rock with some mountain caves you can explore.
- Food recommendation: Baia's Wine is a 5-acre family farm. If you want to stop in for a traditional Georgian feast you should consider calling ahead.



### Wednesday, 29 June: Drive to Batumi (2.75 hours)

### Thursday, 30 June: Batumi

Start the day with a walking tour of Kutaisi before setting off to your final destination. Batumi is known as the Las Vegas of the Black Sea. You'll have two nights here to give you time to walk along the beaches and enjoy the warm sea water.

- Kutaisi Free walking tours: <https://www.budget-georgia.com/free-walking-tour-in-kutaisi.html> (10am) and <https://www.freetour.com/kutaisi/free-walking-tour-kutaisi> (11am)
  - If you don't want to commit to a walking tour, consider doing a solo excursion to: Old Town, Chain Bridge, Jewish District, Central Square, and the Central Bazar.
- Walk along the waterfront promenade (park and beach)
- Climb the Alphabetic Tower (130m high) which is adorned with Georgian script and tops off at a seaside observation deck.
- North of the city you can see flora from around the world at the Batumi Botanical Garden.
- Check out the astronomical clock and Medea monument in the middle of Europe Square.
- City Beach has plenty of space and is close to all of the top attractions in the city.
  - You shouldn't have any issues finding space but if you want to feel secluded you will want to go outside of the city. Ureci beach is 50km away but has black magnetized sand.

### Friday, 31 June: Return to Tbilisi (6 hours)

Use this time to make any stops you missed on the way down or speed through and relax in Tbilisi for your final night.

### Saturday, 1 August: flight back at 4:55am