Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia

THE CAUCASUS AT A CROSSROADS

August 29 to September 12, 2017
Once bound together under a Soviet banner, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan are countries with wildly distinct histories, cultures, languages, religions and peoples. While today’s traveler may consider them off the beaten tourist track, historically these societies were at the crossroads of civilizations from ancient times to the Cold War. Join us as we explore the physical beauty of the Caucasus; the richness of each country’s literary, musical and artistic heritage; the political significance of each nation’s relationships with Russia and Turkey (and hence with the U.S. and nations of the Middle East); and the importance of the region’s natural resources to the global economy. Come discover these fascinating lands with us.

BRETT S. THOMPSON, ’83, DIRECTOR, STANFORD TRAVEL/STUDY

Highlights

EXPLORE the narrow lanes and picturesque courtyards of Baku’s Old City, a UNESCO World Heritage site, in Azerbaijan.

MARVEL at the Greco-Roman temple of Garni, standing out from the medieval Christian churches that dot the Armenian countryside.

SAVOR Georgia’s delicious cuisine and robust wines, and experience the countless ritual toasts made at every Georgian feast.
“Professor Holloway was terrific—relevant, learned and approachable.”

Pam Versaw, MBA ’84, CU Ba Seminar, 2015

DAVID HOLLOWAY, who was born in Dublin, Ireland, is the Raymond A. Spruance Professor of International History at Stanford University, where he teaches political science and history. His research focuses on the international history of nuclear weapons, science and technology in the Soviet Union, and the relationship between international history and international relations theory. Dr. Holloway says, “These three countries in the heart of the Caucasus region find themselves in a position of great geostrategic importance and they have faced great obstacles in overcoming their Soviet legacy. All this makes the Caucasus an intensely interesting part of the world to visit.” During our program, he will discuss with us the 20th-century histories of the three countries, their experiences as part of the Soviet Union, and their attempts to establish themselves as secure and sovereign independent states.

— Senior fellow, Stanford’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
— Former co-director, Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation, and former associate dean, Stanford’s School of Humanities and Sciences
— MA, modern languages and literature, and PhD, social and political sciences, Cambridge University

SIGN UP ONLINE: alumni.stanford.edu/trip?caucasus2017
OR BY PHONE: (650) 725-1093
TUeSDAY & WeDnesDAY, AuGUST 29 & 30
U.S. / BAku, AZeRBaiJAN
DePART the U. S. on OVERnIGHT flights bound FOR BAku, AZeRBaiJAN. ArrIVING ON wEDNESDAY, TRANSfer TO OUR hOTEL, hILTON BAku

THUrsDAY, AuGUST 31
BAku
SPEND a FULL DAY TODAY EXPLORING THE ANCIENT CITY OF BAku, STRATEGICALLY LOCATED ON THE CasPIAN Sea. ON OUR CITY WALK, vISIT BAku’S World HERITAGE-listed Old Town walls, MEDIEVAL gates and wINDING STREETS LINED WITH SHOPS, MOSQUES AND MADRASSAS. COnTINUE TO THE MYSTERIOUS MAIDEn TOWER and the 13th-century ShirVAN ShAH Palace complex, a showpiece of local architecture. NEXT TOUR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AZeRBaiJAN CarpETS and end the day with a WELCOME CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION at the nobEL BrOTHERs MUSEUM, WHERE we LEARN ABOUT BAku’S Important oil BOOM and Its CONNECTION to the nobEL family. HILTON BAku (B,L,D)

SATurDAY, SEpTEMBER 2
sheKI
ONE of the OLDEST TOWNS in AZeRBaiJAN, sheKI wAs MOvED to ITS PRESENT LOCATION AFTER IT was DESTROYED by a mudSLIDE in 1772. EXPLORe a kHAN’S palace, vISIT a STAINED GLASS shop and tour KISH vILLAGE, the origинаl site of sheKI, WHERE archaeoloGISTS have DISCOVERED a CULTIC site going back 3,000 years and Bronze Age skeletons Beneath the centuries-old Albanian church of St. ElIshe. SHEKI SARAY hOTEL (B,L,D)

SUn DAy, SEpTEMBER 3
sheKI / SIGnAGI, GEoRGIa
This moNING CROSS INTO GEoRGIa, A COUNTRY CELEBRATED FOR ITS WINE grapes, which have thrived here for 8,000 years! STOP IN Kakheti, IN the HEART OF GEoRGIa’s WINE COUNTRY, TO TOUR THE VINEYARDS and vISIT A WINE cellar WHERE grapes are aged IN huge ceramic vessels called qvevri. END the day WITH a VINEYARD FEAST that INCLUDES LOCAL Wines, SINGING and DANCING. KABAdONI hOTEL (B,L,D)

MO NdAy, SEpTEMBER 4
SIGnAGI / TBILIsi
ON SIGnAGI’S nARROW STREETS ADMIRE THE CArVED WOODEN BALCONS that DECORATE the TOWN’S BUILDINGS and stop to take in the brillIANT GREENs of the surroundING FIELDS before CONTINUING to OUR hOTEL IN GEoRGIa’s caPITAl, TBILIsi, OUR hOME FOR the NEXT four NIGHTS. TBILIsi MARRIOTT hOTEL (B,L,D)

TUeSDAY, SEpTEMBER 5
TBILIsi
ON our TOUR of TBILIsi TODAY view its RED-ROOFED OLD TOWN and the 4th-century NarIKaLA Fortress FROM the MeTEKHi CHurch of the VIRgin. ALSO tAKE nOTE OF the steam rising FROM the caIsTOM’s DOME-ShAPED sulfur BATHS. MEET GEoRGIan TExTILE CRAFTS-WOMEN and vISIT the MUSEUM of a GEoRGIan painter. LATER in the DAY, PAUSE TO SIP WINE WHILE ENJOYING A PRIVATE COrTeGe of GEoRGIan MUSIC. TBILIsi MARRIOTT hOTEL (B,L,D)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

TBILISI / MTSKHETA / ANANURI

Take the spectacular Georgian Military Highway to the World Heritage site of Mtskheta, capital of Iberia in the 3rd century B.C.E. It was here that Georgia’s conversion to Christianity took place in 337 C.E.; its churches are among the finest in the country. Farther along the highway, visit the 17th-century Ananuri fortress complex before returning to Tbilisi for dinner and an evening of traditional Georgian music and dance.

TBILISI MARRIOTT HOTEL (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

TBILISI / TSEROVANI / GORI

Head out of town to Tserovani, a refugee village where thousands of people displaced by the 2008 conflict with Russia live in small private cottages. Meet the villagers and tour their small businesses. Continue to Gori, birthplace of Georgia’s most infamous native son, Joseph Stalin, where we visit the Stalin House Museum and view his private railway car. From Gori, continue to the ancient cave town of Uplistsikhe, once an important stop along the Silk Road. TBILISI MARRIOTT HOTEL (B,L,D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

TBILISI / YEREVAN, ARMENIA

Today we cross the border into Armenia, the first country in Europe to embrace Christianity as a state religion. The Armenian landscape is dotted with old stone churches and khachkars, elaborately carved basalt crosses unique to the country. Visit the World Heritage-listed monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin, and enjoy lunch in a private home. Arriving in Yerevan, Armenia’s capital city, check in to our hotel, our home base for the next four nights.

MARRIOTT YEREVAN HOTEL (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

YEREVAN

Today’s tour of Yerevan begins at the State History Museum, with its trove of historical artifacts and documents. At the Genocide Memorial, we’ll stop to pay our respects, remembering the more than a million Armenians who lost their lives in the region in the early 20th century. Browse the 5th-century Matendaran, one of the world’s oldest book depositories, then enjoy a tour-and-taste visit to the Yerevan Brandy Factory, producer of brandy so fine that it’s said Winston Churchill ordered 400 bottles of the brandy annually.

MARRIOTT YEREVAN HOTEL (B,L)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

YEREVAN / ECHMIADZIN

Explore the World Heritage site of Echmiadzin, known as the country’s spiritual center. The town’s cathedral dates from the year 301. Returning to Yerevan, dine this evening with local residents.

MARRIOTT YEREVAN HOTEL (B,L,D)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

YEREVAN / KHOR VIRAP / GARNI / GEGHARD

Today visit the monastery of Khor Virap with its fantastic views of Mt. Ararat. Tour the Greco-Roman Temple of Garni and enjoy a private concert of sacred music. Our final stop is at the World Heritage site of Geghard monastery, its monastic cells and church carved into the side of a mountain. Return to Yerevan for a festive farewell reception and dinner to celebrate our adventurous Caucasus journey.

MARRIOTT YEREVAN HOTEL (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

YEREVAN / U.S.

Transfer this morning to the Yerevan airport for flights homeward, arriving back in the U.S the same day.

(B—TIME PERMITTING)
Trip Information

**DATES**
August 29 to September 12, 2017 (15 days)

**SIZE**
32 participants (single accommodations limited—please call for availability).

**COST**
- $9,195 per person, double occupancy
- $10,795 per person, single occupancy
  *Association nonmembers add $300 per person

**INCLUDED**
- 13 nights of deluxe hotel accommodations
- 13 breakfasts, 12 lunches and 10 dinners
- Welcome and farewell receptions
- Gratuities to guides and drivers for all group activities
- All tours and excursions as described in the itinerary
- Transfers and baggage handling on program arrival and departure days
- Minimal medical, accident and evacuation insurance
- Educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recommended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information
- Services of our professional tour manager to assist you throughout the program

**NOT INCLUDED**
- International and U.S. domestic airfare
- Passport and visa fees
- Immunization costs
- Meals and beverages other than those specified as included
- Independent and private transfers
- Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance
- Excess-baggage charges
- Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services
- Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services
- International and U.S. domestic airfare is not included in the program cost. Round-trip, economy-class airfare on Lufthansa and Austrian airlines from San Francisco to Baku, Azerbaijan, and return from Yerevan, Armenia, is approximately $1,700 as of September 2016 and is subject to change without notice. Information on recommended flight itineraries will be sent by our designated agent.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**
We consider this program to be physically demanding and strenuous, suitable for travelers in excellent health with greater-than-average stamina and an enthusiasm for adventurous travel experiences. We expect that participants will be a self-selecting group whose interest in the places we visit outweighs the need for creature comforts. This program involves a great deal of travel in areas with a developing infrastructure. Travelers need to handle their own luggage at airport customs and border crossings where porters are not available. Daily activities include one to three miles of walking, often on uneven and rocky terrain. In many instances stairs are unavailable or do not have handrails. Our journey at times requires several hours of travel by motor coach, the longest drives being up to 10 hours. We make occasional rest stops, but often toilets are not available and nature’s facilities are more inviting and abundant than those that are manmade. Due to poor repair and some unpaved rural roads, travel may be slow at times. Elevators are limited or unavailable. Medical treatment and care are not always available or up to U.S. standards. In many ways, the challenges of this program are part of the learning experience. Daytime temperatures in the Caucasus at this time of year range from the low 50s (°F) to the high 70s, with chances of rain. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on this program.
Deposit & Final Payment
A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to hold your space on this program. Sign up online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?caucasus2017 or call the Travel/Study office at (650) 725-1093. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

Cancellations & Refunds
Deposits and any payments are refundable, less a $500-per-person cancellation fee, until 120 days prior to departure. After that date, refunds can be made only if the program is sold out and your place(s) can be resold, in which case a $1,000-per-person cancellation fee will apply.

Insurance
Stanford Travel/Study provides all travelers who are U.S. or Canadian citizens with minimal medical, accident and evacuation coverage under our group-travel insurance policy. Our group policy is intended to provide minimal levels of protection while you are traveling on this program. You may choose to subscribe to optional trip-cancellation and baggage insurance. Information offering such insurance will be provided to travelers with their welcome materials. The product offered includes special benefits if you purchase your policy within 14 days of written confirmation of your participation on the trip.

Eligibility
We encourage membership in the Alumni Association as the program cost for nonmembers is $300 more than the members’ price. A person traveling as a guest paid for by a current member will not be charged the nonmember fee. For more information or to purchase a membership, visit alumni.stanford/goto/membership or call (650) 725-0692.

Responsibility
The Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford University and our operators act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and exercise every care possible in doing so. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motor coach, launch or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, force majeure or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to this published itinerary as may be deemed necessary. The right is reserved to cancel any program prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the program. No refund will be made for an unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time that passengers are not onboard their plane or conveyance. Neither the Alumni Association, Stanford University nor our operators accept liability for any carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in connection with the tour. Program price is based on rates in effect in September 2016 and is subject to change without notice to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates, tariffs or fuel charges.
“There’s no way I could ever have done a trip like this on my own. The Stanford trip leadership was outstanding and the logistics were perfect. We were incredibly well-looked-after.”

ABBY WILDER, MBA ’82, EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK, 2015