

## Svaneti & the Transcaucasian Trail, Georgia

Trekking in Georgia through the majestic mountains and charming villages of remote Upper Svaneti.



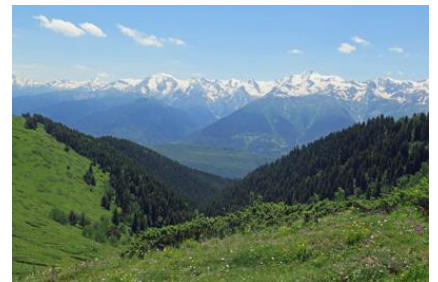
### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Guesthouses
Grade	Vigorous / Strenuous
Duration	12 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 6 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Georgia
Land only	Joining in Tbilisi, Georgia
Max altitude	2,947m/9,725ft, Guli Pass, Day 5

**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**



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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2022 Dates:

Wed 15 Jun - Sun 26 Jun

Wed 10 Aug - Sun 21 Aug

Wed 31 Aug - Sun 11 Sep

### 2023 Dates:

Wed 14 Jun - Sun 25 Jun

Wed 09 Aug - Sun 20 Aug

Wed 30 Aug - Sun 10 Sep

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

Please note that single rooms are only available in Tbilisi and at select guesthouses on trek. Please see the Accommodation section for details of where this applies.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your trip highlights

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- Follow in the footsteps of the original silk traders trekking the most beautiful section of the new Transcaucasian Trail.
- Stay in traditional watchtower villages, including beautiful Ushguli, now a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Explore the unspoilt alpine scenery of ancient Upper Svaneti, one of the wildest, most mysterious regions of Georgia
- Trek across high mountain passes and through hidden valleys with glaciers and waterfalls.
- Have your luggage transferred each day so all you need to carry on trek is a small daysack.
- Enjoy the hospitality of local families, experiencing the distinctive Svaneti culture firsthand, along with their excellent home produced food.
- Step back in time on a guided walking tour of Tbilisi, Georgia's remarkable capital city.

## Trip summary

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Bordering Europe, Asia and the Middle East, Georgia has absorbed the influences of many cultures over the centuries, yet has fiercely retained its own distinctive traditions and cultural identity. Nowhere more so than in the Caucasian Mountains which have remained geographically and culturally isolated and little-touched by the outside world. Only now, with the opening of a new long walking distance trail, is this region emerging as a rewarding new destination for intrepid trekkers.

The Transcaucasian Trail is a brand new, long distance footpath linking the Greater and Lesser Caucasian mountains. Traversing a vast region of immense diversity, this ambitious project will eventually be over 3,000km in length, pass through three countries, link numerous national parks and open up a challenging trekking trail whilst still preserving the region's rich heritage.

One of the most scenically spectacular sections of the trail goes through the remote Upper Svaneti region. The pristine scenery is characterised by soaring, snowy peaks, green verdant valleys, dazzling blue glaciers and carpets of wildflowers in the summer months. In addition to the stunning alpine scenery, the isolation of Upper Svaneti has meant that its unique and striking architecture has largely remained intact. The tall watchtowers that dominate each farmhouse, hamlet and village still exist because the independent, and at one time fierce, inhabitants were never ruled by a feudal overlord. Each clan or family relied on the towers to defend themselves from outside invaders, and of course sometimes from their neighbours. These towers are now being carefully preserved in villages such as Ushguli, now a UNESCO World Heritage site and your final destination on the trek.

By staying in simple guest houses and family homes along the trail you will gain an insight into the traditional way of life in Svaneti. Most families still own their own cow and pigs and make their own cheese and yoghurt. An added bonus is that Georgia is one of the oldest wine producing countries in the world, and in the mountains you may well also be offered locally brewed firewater. You will certainly enjoy wonderful home produced and home cooked food.

At the end of your trek, you will explore more of Georgia's historic past on a walking tour of the capital city, Tbilisi. Here, you can trace the country's fascinating history and ethnic influences in the winding streets, public squares and atmospheric, crumbling buildings.

With its combination of wild, mountain landscapes, rugged trekking, cultural interest and warm hospitality, this holiday offers a superb introduction to a country that, over time, may well become known as one of the world's premier trekking destinations.

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-3	Fly to Tbilisi and travel to Svaneti
Days 4-9	Trek from Etseri to Ushguli
Day 10	Drive to Kotaisi. Walking tour of the city.
Day 11	Drive to Tbilisi, sightseeing
Day 12	Fly to UK

## Your guide

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Your local guide will be English-speaking and will look after all arrangements for you, as well as being able to provide you with a wealth of knowledge about both Georgia and the remote Svaneti region.

### Special notes

#### Accommodation

The standard of accommodation on trek is simple but generally good, with twin share rooms available everywhere. In the less remote villages en suite rooms are sometimes available, elsewhere there is a shared western toilet and shower with hot water.

For a supplement, single rooms are available in Tbilisi and on five nights whilst on trek. Please see the Accommodation section of this detailed itinerary for details of where this applies.

#### Grading

We have graded this trip as vigorous but please be aware that the optional walk on day 4 to the Guli Pass is equivalent to our Strenuous grade. If you would prefer not to do this walk, there is a less demanding option to a scenic waterfall, as described in this itinerary.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Depart London

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Today you will depart London on your overnight flight to Georgia.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Tbilisi.

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You will be met on arrival at Tbilisi airport and there will be a group transfer to your centrally located hotel in the city.

**Overnight: Hotel City or Similar, Tbilisi**

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## Day 3: Drive to Upper Svaneti - 470km, 9 hours.

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Today you will leave the city behind and make the long journey into the mountains of Upper Svaneti. The roads in Georgia are improving all the time and you initially cross the plains on a dual carriageway. You will stop for breaks en route, and also to get some lunch, before the road starts climbing into the hills beyond Zugdidi. After you reach the dam in the Enguri valley, the road becomes twisty and the scenery increasingly dramatic as it ascends high above the valley floor. Eventually you reach the small village of Etseri in the heart of the mountains. Typical of the villages in Svaneti, it consists of several small hamlets surrounded by fields.

**Overnight: Hanmer Guesthouse or Similar, Etseri (Meals: B D)**

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## Day 4: Trek from Etseri to the Becho Valley - 15km, 6-7 hours.

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Your walk today starts in the sleepy village of Etseri with its ruined watchtower, the first of many that you will see. The way of life in many Svaneti villages has hardly changed for centuries - fields are cut with scythes, oxen pull carts and hay ricks are built by hand. It's almost as though you've stepped into the set of Poldark! A good path leads up the wide valley, wonderfully verdant and green, and when you reach the old summer huts you start to climb in earnest. The views back over Etseri and the whole snowy Svaneti mountain range are superb. As you emerge over the top of the Baku pass at 2,350m/7,710ft, you are rewarded with your first views of Mount Ushba, 4,710m/15,453ft, although at the moment you can see only one of its iconic twin peaks. A long ridge walk through rhododendrons and broadleaf trees leads to a lovely lunch spot by a tiny mountain church. It is mainly downhill from here through a shady forest and alpine meadows, thick with wildflowers in early summer, to reach the unspoilt Becho valley.

Ascent: 1,200 metres. Descent: 1,030 metres.

**Overnight: Grand Hotel Ushba (Guesthouse) or Similar, Mazeri (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 5: Trek to Mestia via Guli Pass, 2,946m/9,655ft - 23km, 10 hours, or Waterfall walk - 17km, 4-5 hours.

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There are two options today, the mighty Guli Pass which is a fabulous yet challenging walk (which meets our Strenuous grade), or the easier, but very beautiful Waterfall Walk. We will provide two guides, so the whole group does not have to do the same walk.

### Guli Pass

On her recent visit to Georgia, Mountain Kingdoms Reservations Manager, Seraphina Berry, completed this walk and declared it one of the finest she'd ever done. High praise indeed!

The day starts early, as you follow the old route to the now abandoned Guli Village, gently climbing up the valley through meadows. Just above the village is a small church, still used for worship once a year, and offering a shady resting point with superb views of Mount Ushba. Above here the path zig zags up to reach the Guli shepherds' huts, and Mount Ushba feels so close you could almost touch it. The path continues to climb



relentlessly until finally you reach the Guli Pass, 2,946m/9,655ft, about five hours after you set off from your guesthouse. It is undoubtedly a tough walk to get here but the incredible views are worth every step. There are snowy peaks in every direction, including Mount Tetnuldi and the whole Svaneti range. The descent from the pass is down a huge valley, covered with brilliantly coloured wildflowers including rare orchids. Some care is needed crossing a waterfall and any remaining snowfields, and there are also some exposed sections, but the walk as a whole is delightful.

Continuing along a small track, the Mestia shepherds' huts are reached about three hours after the pass, and then the trail descends more steeply on narrow paths until you finally reach the "capital" of Upper Svaneti, Mestia.

Ascent: 1,420 metres. Descent: 1680 metres.

#### **Waterfall walk**

For those who prefer an easier day, you will walk to the head of the valley and up through forest, soon starting to see the huge waterfall ahead. It's a beautiful, relatively easy walk to the base of the waterfall, and for those with energy, you can climb to the top of the falls. There are stunning views on this walk, which is the start of the route up to Mount Ushba North Base Camp. Your return is by the same route to the road head where you will be picked up by vehicle and driven the half hour to the small town of Mestia, where those who have chosen the Guli Pass walk will join you.

Ascent: 500 metres. Descent: 500 metres.

**Overnight: Edelweiss Guesthouse or Similar, Mestia (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 6: Trek to Zhabeshi valley - 16km, 6 hours.**

A contrasting day today, with more wonderful scenery but emphasis also on the traditional hamlets and villages of the Zhabeshi valley, full of charm and historic interest. The route starts from your guesthouse in Mestia and you will walk out through the old town. Mestia is the central town of Upper Svaneti and the only place with more than one shop and even a handful of restaurants. It also has a spectacular number of clan watchtowers as well as many cows, pigs and a few sheep.

Your route quickly climbs above the old town to reach the home meadows. There are splendid views up to the Chalati Glacier, Mount Ushba and Tetnuldi. The small airport of Mestia can be seen from here, shoehorned into the valley floor and notoriously weather dependent. After a couple of hours, and one short steep climb, you reach the pass at about 2,000m/6,562ft. Shortly after there is a welcome lunch spot in a flat, reedy area with extensive views of the Zhabeshi valley. You may be able to see your destination for the night in the far distance. The valley is noted for its tiny hamlets all with watchtowers and the afternoon is spent contouring along the valley on paths and tracks through these hamlets. Eventually you follow a tiny path along the raging river and cross by a newly built footbridge to Chvabiani, a hamlet surrounded by verdant fields and your stop for the night.



Ascent: 760 metres. Descent: 520 metres.

**Overnight: Goto's Guesthouse or Similar, Zhabeshi (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 7: Trek to Adishi - 11km, 5-6 hours.**

A little more effort is needed first thing this morning as you follow the cows uphill through the village. You pass an ancient church before zig zagging through meadows and trees, with wonderful views back down the valley, and opposite, to the gorge. At the top you emerge to great mountain vistas and the more surprising view of the Tetnuldi chairlift and ski piste. This is passed in just 15 minutes and happily you are back to the beautiful meadows and glorious wildflowers.

The path this afternoon is idyllic, passing through a mixture of meadows, broadleaf and pine forest, and crossing numerous tiny, rushing streams. Suddenly the petite, hidden village of Adishi comes into view nestled into the hillside just below.

Adishi was abandoned until a few years ago, and now is permanently inhabited, although snowbound for seven or eight months of the year. Local families have opened up their houses as simple guest houses for trekkers.

Ascent: 900 metres. Descent: 525 metres.

**Overnight: Adishi Guesthouse, Adishi (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Trek to Iprari - 18km, 8 hours.**

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It's a gentle start to the walk today, as your path slowly ascends the Adishi Valley past grazing cows and horses. After an hour or so you reach a little church and your first views of the mighty Tetnuldi Glacier and the highest range of mountains in Georgia. You finally reach the river crossing, and generally your guide will arrange for you to cross the river on horseback - usually your host from the night before will take you across. After stopping to admire the glacier, and no doubt take many photos, you start the climb to the pass. This is steep to start with and can be wet and muddy, but you are soon rewarded with fabulous views and a gentler path. The Chogniri Pass opens up a remarkable vista and it is worth walking along the ridge to view the imposing Shkhara range, including Georgia's highest peak, mount Shkhara, at 5,200m/17,060ft, spread in a panorama before you.

The descent to Iprari is initially on a small path through flower-filled meadows before you reach the valley floor and a track beside a river that eventually narrows to a spectacular gorge.

Ascent: 860 metres. Descent: 1,050 metres.

**Overnight: Iprari Guesthouse, Iprari (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Trek to Ushguli - 12km, 4-5 hours.**

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A downhill track leads to a short 15 minute stretch on the road through a small hamlet. There is an impressive monastery close by on a hilltop and it is worth asking your guide the story of how it was built. A steep uphill at the semi-ruined village of Davud leads to a delightful contouring balcony path that ascends and descends through meadows and woodland, with delightful views across the valley.

After three or four hours you reach the road and walk for half an hour or so to the first settlement at Ushguli. After checking in to your guesthouse, you will have a chance to explore the three beautiful settlements in this valley. It is well worth walking up to the 9th century monastery church of Lamaria, set against the towering backdrop of Mount Shkhara.



Ascent: 860 metres. Descent: 1,050 metres.

**Overnight: Hotel Riho or Similar, Ushguli (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 10: Drive to Kutaisi via Zugdidi - 6-7 hours. City walking tour of Kutaisi.**

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Today you make the return drive to Kutaisi, Georgia's second city, via Zugdidi.

After checking into your hotel, time permitting, you will go on a walking tour of the city including the controversially restored Bagrati Cathedral.

**Overnight: Argo Palace Guesthouse or Similar, Kutaisi (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 11: Drive to Tbilisi - 3-4 hours. Afternoon walking sightseeing tour of city.**

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It is a couple of hours drive back to Tbilisi where you will check into your hotel and then in the afternoon enjoy a walking tour of some of the main sights. The city is a beguiling mixture of east and west, and despite being sacked several times by different invaders, has architectural remnants of the Persian, Tartar, Jewish and Armenian inhabitants who once lived here.

Freedom Square, laid out by the Russians in the 19th century, is the heart of modern Tbilisi but it's only a short walk from here to go back in history to visit a number of old winding streets. On the other side of Freedom Square is an atmospheric area of crumbling Art Nouveau houses, slowly being restored.

**Overnight: Hotel City or Similar, Tbilisi (Meals: B D)**

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**Day 12: Transfer to airport and fly to London.**

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After breakfast there will be a group transfer back to Tbilisi airport to catch your flight home. **(Meals: B)**

## Our grading system

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Trekking the High Caucasus, Georgia is graded as a Vigorous/Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

### **Vigorous**

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

### **Strenuous**

Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation.

## Trip altitude

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**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.



## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ An English-speaking local leader
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK (flight inclusive option).
- ✓ Single timed group transfer to/from Tbilisi airport at the start and end of the holiday
- ✓ Good twin share, en suite standard hotel accommodation in Tbilisi
- ✓ Simple guesthouse, twin share accommodation elsewhere
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All transfers as per the itinerary
- ✓ 10 Breakfasts, 7 lunches and 9 dinners
- ✓ Sightseeing and activities as specified
- ✓ Luggage transfer between accommodations
- ✓ The option of joining one of our pre-trip meets in the Cotswolds
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Locally paid bar bills and laundry
- ✗ Lunches on days 1, 2, 10 & 11
- ✗ Dinner on days 1 & 11
- ✗ Optional activities
- ✗ Tips
- ✗ Visa (where applicable)

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).

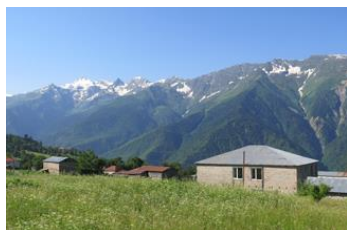
## Your accommodation

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### **Hotel City or Similar, Tbilisi**

A centrally located 3\* hotel with en suite facilities and Wi-Fi. There is a bar and rooftop terrace. The main sights of Tbilisi are within easy walking distance. Single room option is available at this hotel.



### **Hanmer Guesthouse or Similar, Etseri**

This guesthouse is set in fields in one of the hamlets of Etseri, with stunning views of the Upper Svaneti mountains. There are simple, comfortable twin bedrooms with a couple of shared bathrooms. The home cooked food is delicious. There is no single room option at this guesthouse.



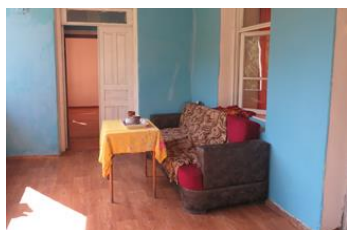
### **Grand Hotel Ushba (Guesthouse) or Similar, Mazeri**

A simple, comfortable guesthouse with great mountain views, and ideally situated at the top of the valley. Shared facilities within the guesthouse. Single room option is available at this guesthouse.



### **Edelweiss Guesthouse or Similar, Mestia**

Comfortable en suite rooms and a great location in the centre of Mestia. The wood panelled dining room is a cosy place for your meals. Single room option is available at this guesthouse.



### **Goto's Guesthouse or Similar, Zhabeshi**

Set in the heart of the small village of Chvabiani, this simple guesthouse with shared facilities is run by a hospitable local family. Delicious food. There is no single room option at this guesthouse.



### **Adishi Guesthouse, Adishi**

A very modest guesthouse in this extremely remote settlement. Simple rooms with shared facilities. There is no single room option at this guesthouse.



### **Iprari Guesthouse, Iprari**

The Iprari is a large guesthouse run by six sisters. It is very well organised with comfortable rooms and shared facilities. There is no single room option at this guesthouse.



### **Hotel Riho or Similar, Ushguli**

Family run guesthouse in the heart of Ushguli. Excellent food. Shared facilities within the guesthouse. Single room option is available at this guesthouse.



### **Argo Palace Guesthouse or Similar, Kutaisi**

The modern equivalent of a family guesthouse, with comfortable en suite rooms. The very friendly lady who owns this guesthouse provides delicious home-made food. Single room option is available at this guesthouse.

## **Meal arrangements**

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10 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 9 dinners.

## **Flight arrangements**

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### **Flight inclusive from price**

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare. Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### **Flight upgrades and regional Airports**

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## **Further information**

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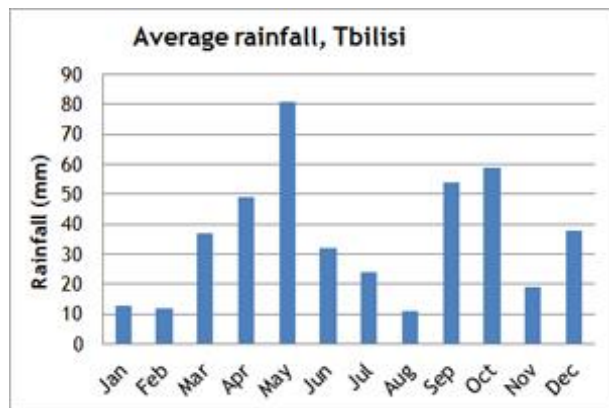
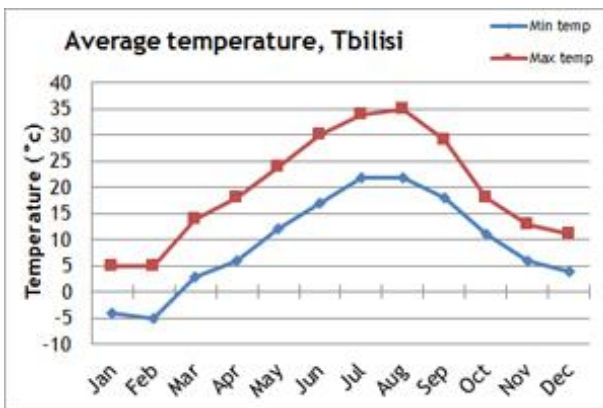
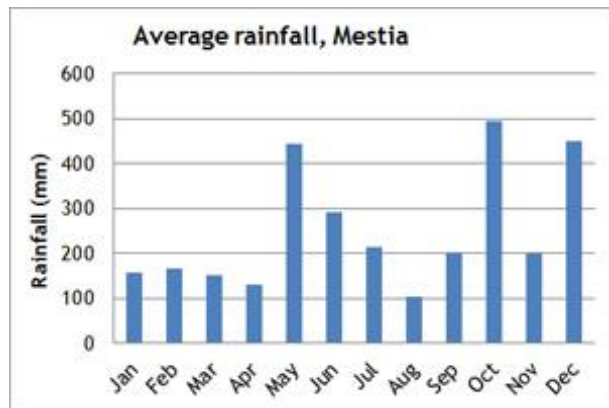
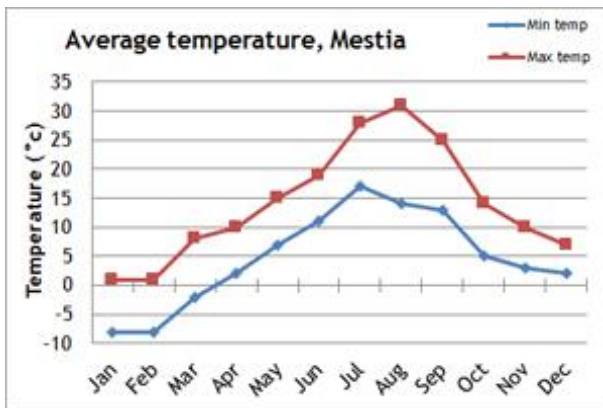
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## **The nature of adventure travel**

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information



## Extensions

### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This trekking itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms and explores the remote Upper Svaneti region of Georgia; a pristine and little-known region of the Upper Caucasus
- You will be one of the first to trek on sections of the newly established, award winning, Transcaucasian Trail
- Your local English-speaking guide will have excellent knowledge and experience of the trekking route and of the local history and culture
- On trek you will stay in family run guesthouses, thereby making a positive contribution to local communities
- All meals are included on trek, and the food of the region is delicious
- You only need to carry a day sack as your main luggage is transferred for you by jeep or packhorse
- Group airport transfers and a guided walking tour of Tbilisi are included in the price of your holiday.
- We research our new holidays ourselves and staff member, Seraphina Berry, completed this trek in the summer of 2018. If you have any questions about this trip please contact Seraphina on 01453 844400, she will be very happy to help.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What we say

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*Georgia is a fascinating country, set right on the outer edges of Europe, and within Georgia itself, the Svaneti region is extremely remote. The journey there is well worth the effort, as you trek through magical countryside, home of myths and legends, soaring stone watchtowers and stunning mountains and glaciers. There are hillsides covered in wild flowers, sparkling mountain streams and plenty of delicious wine!*  
- Seraphina Berry, Mountain Kingdoms

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### Carbon Offsetting

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### Reducing Carbon Emissions

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

