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Georgia & Armenia Delegation for Friendship Among Women Travel Information

Passports

All travelers require a valid passport in order to visit Georgia and Armenia. Your passport must remain valid for at least six months after the last day of your visit. If you do not have a passport, or if it expires prior to April 19, 2019, apply for a new one or renew your current one right away.

Be sure your passport has been signed and has adequate space remaining for entry and exit stamps. The last several pages marked "Amendments and Endorsements" cannot be used for visas.

We recommend that you make two photocopies of your passport photo page. You should leave one copy at home and carry one copy with you on the trip.

Visas

For U.S. Citizens:

U.S. passport holders can travel to Georgia and Armenia visa-free.

For Other Nationalities:

Most other nationalities, including Canadian and European, DO require a visa to enter these countries. Please check with the embassy/consulate for entry requirements. Also, please check with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) if returning to the United States before departure to see if any re-entry requirements apply to your situation.

Travel and Trip Cancellation Insurance

We highly recommend the purchase of travel insurance for this tour.

General Medical Information

MIR Corp. is not qualified to convey medical advice; what follows is a summary of standard practices based on information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, and other sources. Consult your personal physician for medical advice on travel to Georgia and Armenia. Your physician is most familiar with your personal medical history and is best qualified to determine your particular needs.

Resources for obtaining travel medical information include:

206.624.7289 ♦ 800.424.7289 ♦ Fax: 206.624.7360
85 South Washington Street, Suite 210, Seattle, WA 98104
info@mircorp.com ♦ www.mircorp.com

Seattle ♦ Moscow ♦ St. Petersburg ♦ Irkutsk ♦ Ulan Ude ♦ Kiev ♦ Tashkent

- State or county public health departments
- Travelers' clinics usually associated with university medical centers
- The CDC (for faxed information, call toll-free 888-232-3299 and follow the recorded instructions)
- The CDC's web site at www.cdc.gov (go to 'Travelers' Health)
- The Travel Health Online website at www.tripprep.com
- Libraries may have a current edition of *Health Information for International Travel*, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

No immunizations are required for entry to Georgia or Armenia from the United States or for reentry into the United States from those countries. Several preventive measures are generally recommended for international travel.

The CDC recommends that **tetanus/diphtheria** and **polio** inoculations be up to date for all international travel, and that you consider an immunization against **hepatitis A**. The CDC also recommends that you consider vaccination with a single shot of Typhim Vi against **typhoid fever**.

Please plan ahead since some inoculations must be given in sequence and the entire immunization process could take as long as eight weeks for those who have not previously completed the primary series.

Food- and water-borne diseases are the most common cause of illness to travelers, and it is prudent to be cautious about what you eat and drink. The best means of minimizing exposure to such ailments is to:

- exercise caution in what you eat and drink outside of group meals
- not consume any un-boiled milk or homemade cheese products in the countryside
- avoid food purchased from street vendors;
- avoid uncooked food or fruits and vegetables that you cannot peel yourself
- avoid ice in drinks
- drink only bottled or boiled water
- wash your hands before eating or drinking

Pepto Bismol is often an effective treatment for gastric distress; many travelers have also found it to be useful as a preventive medication and safeguard against diarrhea and other common digestive problems associated with travel. You may instead wish to ask your doctor to recommend anti-diarrhea medication to protect against mild stomach upsets, which do occasionally occur.

Bottled and boiled water is available in all the places you will visit. Please drink only bottled or boiled water or other bottled beverages. In general, it is not safe to drink the water from hotel taps in the South Caucasus. Care should be taken not to swallow unpurified water when brushing teeth or showering. When in doubt, please ask your Tour Manager's advice.

Since parts of the trip will be in remote areas, it is advisable to **have physical and dental check-ups** before your trip.

If you think you may be prone to **motion sickness** from bus rides or are susceptible to respiratory infections from dusty air, please bring medications to alleviate your discomfort.

Pack an ample supply of **basic health and first-aid needs**, including any prescription drugs and vitamins you use, over-the-counter medications for common ailments such as colds or stomach disorders, aspirin or other analgesic, Band-Aids and topical antiseptic, insect repellent and insect-bite relief products. Personal hygiene items are not always readily available; please be sure to bring any supplies you may need.

If you wear prescription **glasses or contact lenses**, please bring an extra pair. A strap to prevent accidental loss of eyeglasses may prove useful and are readily available at most sporting goods or outdoor outfitter stores.

Carry a list of the **generic names of any drugs that you use**. Standards of pharmacology vary greatly for medications produced abroad; please carry an adequate supply of your prescriptions, particularly since you will be traveling in remote areas. Always pack them in your carry on. Carry with you an **up-to-date record of your allergies or chronic medical problems** so that emergency treatment, if necessary, can be carried out without endangering your health. Your physician can prepare a summary record for you. You should also carry with you the phone number for your physician's 24-hour answering service.

You can take fullest advantage of the varied opportunities this program offers if you are in good health and physical condition. Comfortable clothing and walking shoes are highly recommended.

Medical facilities are available in the South Caucasus; however, since standards and methods of treatments are not the same as ours, the prospect of illness or hospitalization while traveling should not be taken lightly. If you have a serious medical problem or a medical condition that might be adversely affected by strenuous travel, please contact us so we may provide more precise information.

Flight Arrangements

Because there are a number of flight options available, there is no group flight for this program. If you prefer to book your own flights, forward a copy of the confirmation to Anne Thorsteinson at annet@mircorp.com. If you would like assistance with booking your flights, you may contact Anne at annet@mircorp.com or by telephone at 855-691-7903.

Accommodations

We travel along modern routes in air-conditioned vehicles. We will be staying in first-class, centrally located hotels in Tbilisi and Yerevan, and in the best available hotels in Kazbegi and Signagi.

Food & Beverage

Georgia and Armenia known for its outstanding cuisine and food on the trip will be varied and tasty. The enclosed country overviews contain detailed information about variations and regional specialties for every country. It is not difficult to accommodate special needs such as vegetarian or low fat diets, as long as they are identified in advance. Please let us know if you have any special dietary needs. If you are uncomfortable with eating unfamiliar foods, or feel you will need foods to supplement your nutritional needs (e.g. non-meat based protein), it may be useful to bring your own snacks such as crackers, protein bars, nuts, dried fruit, etc.

Bottled water will be provided throughout the trip.

Currency

Georgia and Armenian are largely cash-based societies and US dollars are easily converted. At the time of this writing (subject to change daily):

One US dollar = 2.42 Georgian Lari

One US dollar = 480 Armenian Dram

While you should bring a credit card as a backup for emergencies, you should be prepared to rely on cash for most of your purchases. Hotels will be happy to exchange your large bills such as \$100s and \$50s into local currency. You should also bring a selection of ones and fives (approximately \$20 in ones and \$50 in fives) for purchasing small souvenirs and gifts. All bills should be relatively new and in good condition. Old, faded, or ripped bills will not be accepted nor will fifties and hundreds that are not the new issue (with the large-size portrait on the bill).

Do not bring Traveler's Checks as places that exchange them are few and commission charged for converting Traveler's Checks into cash is high. Credit cards are not widely accepted, but at the major hotels, restaurants, and some stores and shops, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express cards can be used. It may be possible to obtain a cash advance from your Visa and MasterCard at certain banks at a high commission rate. Personal checks are not accepted anywhere in the Caucasus.

Other than your personal shopping expenses you will only need money for the following: extra alcoholic beverages, food not included in the group meals, phone/fax bills, and excess baggage charges (if applicable). Refer to the detailed itinerary for your trip for a complete list of included items.

Valuables

Petty crime exists in the Caucasus and you should be wary of pickpockets in crowded public places. In hotels, you may store valuables in the safe in your room or check them with the desk clerk. However, it is generally best to travel only with valuables that you can wear or carry with you at all times. Leave others behind. It is also a good idea to carry your cash, credit cards and passport with you at all times, or lock them in your hotel room safe. You may wish to bring a money belt or hip pack for this purpose.

Keep your suitcases and carry-on luggage locked both in transit (except to and from the US) and in your hotel room. Never leave your purse, pack, or camera bag unattended.

Electricity

Electrical power in Georgia and Armenia is 220 V, 50 Hz. Plugs require a European two-pronged socket with round pins. If you plan to bring American standard 110-volt equipment a converter and an adapter plug will be required. (If your appliances have dual voltage, only the adapter plug will be necessary.) Most standard adapter/converter kits available in the US will have the necessary plug configuration to fit any of these electric outlets; they can be purchased at large department stores, luggage stores, or at specialty travel-

equipment shops. If you plan to bring sensitive electronic equipment, you should bring a 220-volt surge suppresser.

However, it is best to bring as few electrical appliances as possible as their use will be limited. If you use an electric razor, you may wish to bring a battery operated one, with extra batteries.

Hair dryers will be available at all of your hotels.

International Telephone Service

It is easy to place international phone calls and send faxes to Georgia and Armenia. Placing an international call from these countries may require the assistance of your hotel operator and can be quite expensive - up to \$10.00 per minute. Contact numbers will be provided with your final documents. Pre-paid calling cards purchased in the U.S. generally DO NOT work in these countries.

Country Codes:

Georgia +995

Armenia + 374

Internet

WiFi is available at all hotels throughout the trip. Generally free WiFi is available in hotel lobbies. Internet access in rooms may be at extra cost – inquire at the hotel reception as Internet availability and payment policies are subject to change.

Photography

You will generally be able to photograph or videotape freely on your trip, but there are certain situations where extra care should be taken. If photographing or videotaping an individual, please ask permission first. Particularly in public places, you may encounter people who do not want their photograph taken and who may attempt to forcibly prevent you from doing so. Please **do not** photograph police officers, military personnel, or their facilities. Photography of any kind inside temples is normally strictly forbidden. When in doubt, ask your guide's advice. Fees for taking photographs and videotape at most museums range from \$3 per picture to \$5 for unlimited photographs, depending on the location. Your guide will advise you on the appropriate fee at each location.

Be sure that you are familiar with your camera, including any accessories, before leaving home. Bring extra memory cards with you so you are not forced to delete any photographs to save memory and don't forget your battery and charger.

Shopping

Shopping opportunities in the Caucasus are numerous. Refer to the enclosed country overviews for specific information about the most popular items and souvenirs in each country.

Important: All antiquities need to be certified "exportable" by a special certificate, which is available only at authorized antique shops. Any antiquities obtained in the Caucasus that do not have an "exportable" certificate or seal will be confiscated by Customs upon your departure and reimbursement will be nearly

impossible to obtain. Any losses incurred from purchasing items that are confiscated will be the travelers' responsibility.

Bargaining or haggling is considered a necessity in the markets and bazaars, and you can help your cause by knowing some phrases and the number words.

Smoking Policy

We ask participants to refrain from smoking when with the group – in vehicles and during lectures and group meals. In all situations, please show consideration for fellow travelers who are adversely affected by smoke. In shared accommodations, smoking is permitted only by agreement of both occupants.

Luggage

We strongly urge you to limit yourself to one medium-sized soft suitcase or duffel bag and one carry-on bag. Please pack as lightly as possible.

Your carry-on should include anything you may need in transit. Carry with you:

- Your airline confirmations and passport
- Essential toiletries
- Prescription medications
- A change of clothing appropriate for the initial activities in Baku or Tbilisi, so that you will be more comfortable in the unlikely event that your baggage is delayed in transit or is slow to be delivered to your room upon arrival

You must be able to easily lock and unlock your luggage, including carry-on, for all flights, and should mark all bags with your name and address, inside and out.