Register Today!

To reserve space on this program, please call MIR Corporation at 800-424-7289 or email annet@mircorp.com. Or complete and mail a reservation form which can be found on the trip’s website at https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/alumnae-relations/smith-travel. Smith Travel reservations will be sent directly to MIR for processing. MIR will notify Smith Travel upon receipt of registration and deposit.

A deposit of $500 person is required and is payable by major credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover) or by check, to MIR Corporation-Trust (the tour operator for this program). Credit cards are accepted for deposit payment only. Mail payment and reservation form to: MIR Corporation, 85 S. Washington Street, Suite 210, Seattle, WA 98104. Reservations may also be faxed to MIR Corp at 206-624-7360.

Reservations to be paid in full by May 18, 2020, 90 days prior to departure payable by check only. Reservations received after May 18, 2020, must be accompanied by payment in full. A signed release agreement is required for trip participation.

Terms & Conditions

Included: All accommodation based on double occupancy per itinerary, including local service charge and tax • Meals as listed in itinerary • Group arrival/departure transfers for passengers arriving/departing on scheduled start/end days • All land transportation per itinerary including private motor coach throughout the itinerary • Special cultural events and extensive sightseeing, including entrance fees • Lecture series • Welcome and farewell dinners • Bottled water on buses on tour days • Services of a MIR tour manager throughout the program • Gratuities to tour manager; guides and drivers • Comprehensive pre-departure packet

Not Included: International airfare between the U.S. and the tour start and end cities; air taxes or fuel surcharges; pre- or post-tour services and early hotel check-in; visa or passport fees; medical and trip cancellation/interruption insurance; evacuation costs; food or beverages not included in group meals; items of a personal nature such as laundry, alcohol, telephone expense, excess baggage fees, photography/video fees inside museums; other items not expressly listed as included.

Air Arrangements: Program rates do not include international airfare to Tbilisi or Tbilisi or Yerevan. Due to the variety of flight options available, there is no group flight for this program. A recommended flight itinerary will be sent by MIR, our tour operator, upon confirmation.

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Single Travelers: We make every effort to match single travelers who request a roommate. However, shared accommodations cannot be guaranteed and a single supplement rate will apply.

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Dear Smith Alumnae and Friends,

The little country of Georgia boasts delicious food, deep red wines, and saw-toothed mountains. This itinerary, developed especially for women, includes meetings with the country’s rising female stars in entrepreneurship, politics, and the arts. Throughout the program enjoy special meetings with local women and participate in group discussions led by our study leader, Smith College Professor Brigitte Buettner. We are sharing this trip with alumnae of the MFMR Travel.

Begin with time in the capital, Tbilisi, then explore the UNESCO site of ancient Mtskheta, travel up into the Caucasus Mountains to visit a highland village family, and take an optional hike to Gergeti Trinity Church. Continue the journey to the wine country, listen to polyphonic singing, and experience a traditional Georgian table feast.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bigwood
Director of Travel and Education
Smith College

Program Highlights

- Tour the Georgian National Museum and meet with female archaeologists to learn about their contributions and experiences in the field.
- Visit the Writer’s House of Georgia and meet with the director to learn about her efforts to support the development of Georgian cultural and literary activities.
- Meet with representatives from the nonprofit “Ani for Children Foundation,” and learn about their mission to support local children and young adults with chronic diseases and developmental disabilities.
- Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mtskheta, where Georgia’s conversion to Christianity took place in 317 AD.
- Learn about Georgian culinary traditions, including a cooking class with a local family making khinkali dumplings.
- Visit a studio to observe traditional Georgian felt-making, a craft that has survived the centuries.
- Visit an acclaimed natural organic winery for a wine tasting and a Georgian Table with organic wines, polyphonic singers, and traditional dancers.

Smith Professor, Brigitte Buettner

Brigitte Buettner is a medieval art historian. In addition to covering the full spectrum of classes on the European Middle Ages, she teaches courses on the interactions between the Christian West and the Islamic world during the Crusades, Northern Renaissance painting, the history of portraiture, and the visual history of natural science. She also participates in the globally oriented and thematically based introductory course, Art and Its Histories, offered by the Art Department.

Originally from Switzerland, she did her studies in Paris, and then moved to the United States to work as a collection specialist in the Photo Archive of the Getty Center in Los Angeles prior to joining Smith College.

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When not teaching, writing, or reading, she enjoys traveling, gardening, cooking, eating, and watching (even the most historically inaccurate) period dramas.

Itinerary

August 15-16

Arrive in Georgia’s capital city, Tbilisi. Flight arrival times may be very early morning or possibly late evening. Early check-in or an extra hotel night can be arranged (additional fee may apply). Marriott Tbilisi (Meals In Flight)

August 17-19

Tbilisi

Over the next three days, explore Tbilisi. Begin at the 4th-century Narikala Fortress to visit the medieval dome-shaped sulfur baths. Visit the Simon Janashia Museum — a component of Georgia’s National Museum — for a look at some of the country’s most significant archaeological finds, including the 1.8-million-year-old Homo erectus georgicus skulls unearthed at Dmanisi. Converse with some of the museum’s female archaeologists to learn about their research and gain insight into their experiences in the field. Meet with Georgian female business leaders and female representatives of local non profit organizations to learn about their contributions to contemporary Georgian society. Tour the Presidential Palace, and meet with one of the Georgian president’s advisors (schedules permitting). Browse the wonderful, high-quality handcrafted goods at Gallery 27. Chat with representatives from the local nonprofit “Ani for Children Foundation,” whose mission is to support children and young adults with chronic diseases and developmental disabilities. Visit the Writers’ House of Georgia for a meeting with its director, Natasha Lomouri. During dinner, converse with the evening’s chef, Tekuna Gachcheishvili, who studied in the U.S. and is one of Tbilisi’s rising culinary stars. Marriott Tbilisi (3B, 3L, 2D)

August 20-21

Tbilisi - Kazbegi via Mtskheta

Head into the countryside for the next few days. Take the spectacular Georgian Military Highway to the World Heritage site of Mtskheta, ancient capital of the kingdom of Iberia. Here, admire the imposing Jvari Monastery, one of the first Christian churches in Georgia. Stop in a small village for lunch and a cooking class with a local family, learning how to make traditional Georgian dumplings called khinkali. Visit a felt-making studio and then continue to Kazbegi, an alpine village set in a monumental bowl of mountain peaks, including the Caucasus’ highest, Mt. Kazbek. Take in spectacular views of the mountains and the valley below at the 14th-century church of Tsminda Sameba (“Holy Trinity”). Enjoy a free afternoon to relax at the hotel, or opt for some active walking/hiking in the mountains. Rooms Hotel (2B, 2L, 2D)

August 22-23

Kazbegi - Gori - Tsinandali - Signagi

Depart for the Kakheti region, Georgia’s wine country for an overnight stay. Make a stop along the way in Gori, the birthplace of Joseph Stalin. Enjoy lunch here and a visit to the Stalin Museum, where the wooden hut Stalin was born in still stands. Continue to Tsinandali and check into the beautiful Radisson Tsinandali on arrival, making sure to take in the hotel’s wonderful spa, pool, and dining spaces. Explore Kakheti with a visit to the towns of Nukrissi, Signagi, and Tbianni. Meet with women from the Nukrissi Community Organization, who make Georgian sweets called churkhalis. Explore the fortress town of Signagi, including lunch and a walking tour of the vineyards at Pheasants’ Tears winery in Tbilisi, which produces organic wines from heritage Georgian grapes. Sample wines in the 250-year-old tasting hall, as the winery’s founder explains his mission to protect and support Georgia’s ancient methods. Indulge in a traditional Georgian Table feast, featuring dozens of delicious dishes and countless wines. Radisson Collection Tsinandali Estate Hotel (2B, 2L, 1D)

August 24

Tsinandali - Tbilisi

In Tsinandali Village, visit the family estate of Alexander Chavchavadze, a 19th-century Georgian aristocrat and co-founder of the first and foremost winery in the country. His mansion has been transformed into a museum in honor of the poet and hero. Return to Tbilisi with time to explore independently this evening, gathering for a farewell dinner at Polphonia, which offers a rotating menu of Georgian fusion dishes inspired by the country’s distinctive culinary regions. Marriot Tbilisi (1B, 1D)

August 25

Depart Tbilisi

After breakfast at the hotel, the journey concludes with transfers to the airport for international departure. (1B)

Armenia Post-Tour: August 25-30

From Tbilisi, drive across the border into Armenia, Georgia’s South Caucasian neighbor. Stop at the 11th century Haghartsin Monastery, visit high-altitude Lake Sevan and wander the small mountain resort of Dilijan in the center of an area known as the Armenian Switzerland. Arrive in Yerevan, Armenia’s capital city and check in to the hotel. Enjoy two full days of specialty arranged meetings.

First meet with young students at the Aranid Shirakatsy Lyceum to learn more about daily life and education in Armenia, then enjoy a briefing by a representative of the U.S. Embassy (pending schedules and availability). Chat with representatives of the Armenian Young Women’s Association (AYWA), a Yerevan NGO dedicated to improving the status of women in Armenia, and meet with a member of Armenia’s Parliament for a conversation about contemporary Armenian politics. See Yerevan’s large Republic Square, with broad avenues radiating from it, and tour the Cascade with its exciting Cafesjian Museum of Modern Art. Visit Echmiadzin, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the spiritual center of Armenia. Also visit the nearby ruins of the 7th-century Zvartnots Cathedral. Finally, discover the ancient Adarakan region, and enjoy lunch and a cooking demonstration of traditional Armenian recipes in the beautiful wine cellar of a 170-year-old home. Five nights at the Marriott Yerevan (4B, 4L, 2D)
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Women to Women: Republic of Georgia
A Conversation in the Caucasus
August 15-25, 2020
with Smith Professor Brigitte Buettner
Armenia post-tour extension: August 25-30
Dear Smith Alumnae and Friends,

The little country of Georgia boasts delicious food, deep red wines, and saw-toothed mountains. This itinerary, developed especially for women, includes meetings with the country's rising female stars in entrepreneurship, politics, and the arts. Throughout the program enjoy the company of local women and participate in group discussions led by our study leader, Smith College Professor Brigitte Buettner. We are sharing this trip with alumnae from other women's colleges.

When in the capital, Tbilisi, then explore the UNESCO site of ancient Mtskheta, travel up into the Caucasus Mountains to visit a highland village family, and take an optional hike to Gergeti Trinity Church. Continue the journey to the wine country, listen to polyphonic singing, and experience a traditional Georgian table feast.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Bigwood
Director of Travel and Education
Smith College

Program Highlights

• Tour the Georgian National Museum and meet with female archaeologists to learn about their contributions and experiences in the field.

• Visit the Writer's House of Georgia and meet with the director to learn about her efforts to support the development of Georgian cultural and literary activities.

• Meet with representatives from the nonprofit “Ani for Children Foundation,” and learn about their mission to support local children and young adults with chronic diseases and developmental disabilities.

• Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mtskheta, where Georgia's conversion to Christianity took place in 337 AD.

• Learn about Georgian culinary traditions, including a cooking class with a local family making khinkali dumplings.

• Visit a studio to observe traditional Georgian felt-making, a craft that has survived the centuries.

• Visit an acclaimed natural organic winery for a wine tasting and a Georgian Table with organic wines, polyphonic singers, and traditional dancers.

Smith Professor, Brigitte Buettner

Brigitte Buettner is a medieval art historian. In addition to covering the full spectrum of classes on the European Middle Ages, she teaches courses on the interactions between the Christian West and the Islamic world during the Crusades, Northern Renaissance painting, the history of portraiture, and the visual history of natural science. She also participates in the globally oriented and thematically based introductory course, Art and Its Histories, offered by the Art Department.

Originally from Switzerland, she did her studies in Paris, and then moved to the United States to work as a collection specialist in the Photo Archive of the Getty Center in Los Angeles prior to joining Smith College.

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When not teaching, writing, or reading, she enjoys traveling, gardening, cooking, eating, and watching (even the most historically inaccurate) period dramas.

Itinerary

August 15-16

Depart USA • Arrive Tbilisi, Georgia

Arrive in Georgia's capital city, Tbilisi. Flight arrival times may be very early morning or possibly late evening. Early check-in or an extra hotel night can be arranged (additional fee may apply). Marriott Tbilisi (Meals In Flight)

August 17-19

Tbilisi

Over the next three days, explore Tbilisi. Begin at the 4th-century Narikala Fortress to visit the medieval dome-shaped sulfur baths. Visit the Simon Janashia Museum — a component of Georgia's National Museum — for a look at some of the country’s most significant archaeological finds, including the 1.8-million-year-old Homo erectus georgicus skulls unearthed at Dmanisi. Converse with some of the museum's female archaeologists to learn about their research and gain insight into their experiences in the field. Meet with Georgian female business leaders and female representatives of local non profit organizations to learn about their contributions to contemporary Georgian society. Tour the Presidential Palace, and meet with one of the Georgian president's advisors (schedules permitting). Browse the wonderful, high-quality handcrafted goods at Gallery 27. Chat with representatives from the local nonprofit “Ani for Children Foundation,” whose mission is to support children and young adults with chronic diseases and developmental disabilities.

Visit the Writers’ House of Georgia for a meeting with its director, Natasha Lamouri. During dinner, converse with the evening's chef, Tektuna Gachechiladze, who studied in the U.S. and is one of Tbilisi’s rising culinary stars.

Marriott Tbilisi (3B, 3L, 2D)

August 20-21

Tbilisi • Kazbegi via Mtskheta

Head into the countryside for the next few days. Take the spectacular Georgian Military Highway to the World Heritage site of Mtskheta, ancient capital of the kingdom of Iberia. Here, admire the imposing Jvari Monastery, one of the first Christian churches in Georgia. Stop in a small village for lunch and a cooking class with a local family, learning how to make traditional Georgian dumplings called khinkali. Visit a felt-making studio and then continue to Kazbegi, an alpine village set in a monumental bowl of mountain peaks, including the Caucasus' highest, Mt. Kazbek. Take in spectacular views of the mountains and the valley below at the 14th century church of Tsminda Sameba (“Holy Trinity”). Enjoy a free afternoon to relax at the hotel, or opt for some active walking/hiking in the mountains.

Rooms Hotel (2B, 2L, 2D)

August 22-23

Kazbegi • Gori • Tsinandali • Signagi

Deport for the Kakheti region, Georgia’s wine country for an overnight stay. Make a stop along the way in Gori, the birthplace of Joseph Stalin. Enjoy lunch here and a visit to the Stalin Museum, where the wooden hut Stalin was born in still stands. Continue to Tsinandali and check into the beautiful Radisson Tsinandali on arrival, making use of the hotel's wonderful spa, pool, and dining spaces. Explore Kakheti with a visit to the towns of Nukriani, Signagi, and Tbilani. Meet with women from the Nukriani Community Organization, who make Georgian sweets called churchkhela. Explore the fortress town of Signagi, including lunch and a walking tour of the vineyards at Pheasants’ Tears winery in Tibilisi, which produces organic wines from heritage Georgian grapes. Sample wines in the 250-year-old tasting hall, as the winery’s founder explains his mission to protect and support Georgia’s ancient methods. Indulge in a traditional Georgian Table feast, featuring dozens of delicious dishes and countless woods. Radisson Collection Tsinandali Estate Hotel (2B, 2L, 1D)

August 24

Tsinandali • Tbilisi

In Tsinandali Village, visit the family estate of Alexander Chavchavadze, a 19th-century Georgian aristocrat and co-founder of the first and foremost winery in the country. His mansion has been transformed into a museum in honor of the poet and hero. Return to Tbilisi with time to explore independently this evening, gather for a farewell dinner at Polonia, which offers an rotating menu of Georgian fusion dishes inspired by the country's distinctive culinary regions. Mariott Tbilisi (1B, 1D)

August 25

Depart Tbilisi

After breakfast at the hotel, the journey concludes with transfers to the airport for international departure. (1B)

Armenia Post-Tour: August 25-30

From Tbilisi, drive across the border into Armenia, Georgia’s South Caucasian neighbor. Stop at the 11th century Haghartsin Monastery, host high-altitude Lake Sevan and wander the small mountain resort of Diljian in the center of an area known as the Armenian Switzerland. Arrive in Yerevan, Armenia’s capital city and check into the hotel. Enjoy two full days of specially arranged meetings.

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Sincerely,

Elizabeth Blywood
Director of Travel and Education
Smith College

Program Highlights

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• Visit the Writer’s House of Georgia and meet with the director to learn about her efforts to support the development of Georgian cultural and literary activities.

• Meet with representatives from the nonprofit “Ani for Children Foundation,” and learn about their mission to support local children and young adults with chronic diseases and developmental disabilities.

• Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mtskheta, where Georgia’s conversion to Christianity took place in 337 AD.

• Learn about Georgian culinary traditions, including a cooking class with a local family making khinkali dumplings.

• Visit a studio to observe traditional Georgian felt-making, a craft that has survived the centuries.

• Visit an acclimated natural organic winery for a wine tasting and a Georgian Table with organic wines, polyphonic singers, and traditional dancers.

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August 20-21

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August 22-23

Kazbegi • Gori • Tsinandali • Signagi

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To reserve space on this program, please call MIR Corporation at 800-424-7289 or email annet@mircorp.com. Or complete and mail a reservation form which can be found on the trip’s website at https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/alumnae-relations/smith-travel. Smith Travel reservations will be sent directly to MIR for processing. MIR will notify Smith Travel upon receipt of registration and deposit.

A deposit of $500 person is required and is payable by major credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover) or by check, to MIR Corporation-Trust (the tour operator for this program). Credit cards are accepted for deposit payment only. Mail payment and reservation form to: MIR Corporation, 85 S. Washington Street, Suite 210, Seattle, WA 98104. Reservations may also be faxed to MIR Corp at 206-624-7360

Reservations to be paid in full by May 18, 2020. Reservations received after May 18, 2020, must be accompanied by payment in full. A signed release agreement is required for trip participation.

Terms & Conditions

Included: All accommodation based on double occupancy per itinerary, including local service charge and tax • Meals as listed in itinerary • Group arrival/departure transfers for passengers arriving/departing on scheduled start/end days • All land transportation per itinerary including private motor coach throughout the itinerary • Special cultural events and extensive sightseeing, including entrance fees • Lecture series • Welcome and farewell dinners • Bottled water on buses on tour days • Services of a MIR tour manager throughout the program • Gratuities to tour manager; guides and drivers • Comprehensive pre-departure packet

Not Included: International airfare between the U.S. and the tour start and end cities; air taxes or fuel surcharges; pre- or post-tour services and early hotel check-in; visa or passport fees; medical and trip cancellation/interruption insurance; evacuation costs; food or beverages not included in group meals; items of a personal nature such as laundry, alcohol, telephone expense, excess baggage fees, photography/video fees inside museums; other items not expressly listed as included.

Air Arrangements: Program rates do not include international airfare to Tbilisi from Tbilisi or Yerevan. Due to the variety of flight options available, there is no group flight for this program. A recommended flight itinerary will be sent by MIR, our tour operator, upon confirmation.

Cancellations and Refunds: All cancellations must be made in writing to MIR Corporation and the following cancellation charges will apply: Cancellations received 91 or more days before departure, deposits paid or due in full of $500 per person; those received 61 days to 90 days before departure, 50% of land tour cost per person; those received 60 days or less before departure, no refund. Refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the full tour for any reason at all. MIR Corporation reserves the right to decline to accept any person as a participant in a tour, or to require any participant to withdraw from a tour at any time at his/ her own expense, when such action is determined by tour staff to be in the best interest of the health, safety, or general welfare of the tour group or of the individual participant, and subject only to the requirement that the recoverable cost of unused services and accommodations be refunded, if any.

Single Travelers: We make every effort to match single travelers who request a roommate. However, shared accommodations cannot be guaranteed and a single supplement rate will apply.

Insurance: Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is available. Insurance information will be sent to you by Smith Travel on receipt of your registration. To contact Smith Travel office please call 800-225-2029 or email alumnae@smith.edu.

Responsibility: A Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement of MIR Corporation and Smith College for loss of property, injury, illness or death will be provided to passengers upon enrollment and is available to prospective travelers upon request. A signed release and exclusions agreement is required for trip participation.

Women to Women: Republic of Georgia
A Conversation in the Caucasus
August 15-25, 2020

with Smith Professor Brigitte Buettner
Armenia post-tour extension: August 25-30

Program Price:
Georgia Main Tour: $5,300 per person double occupancy
Solo Supplement: $935
Armenia Post-Tour: $2,095 per person double occupancy
Solo Supplement: $315