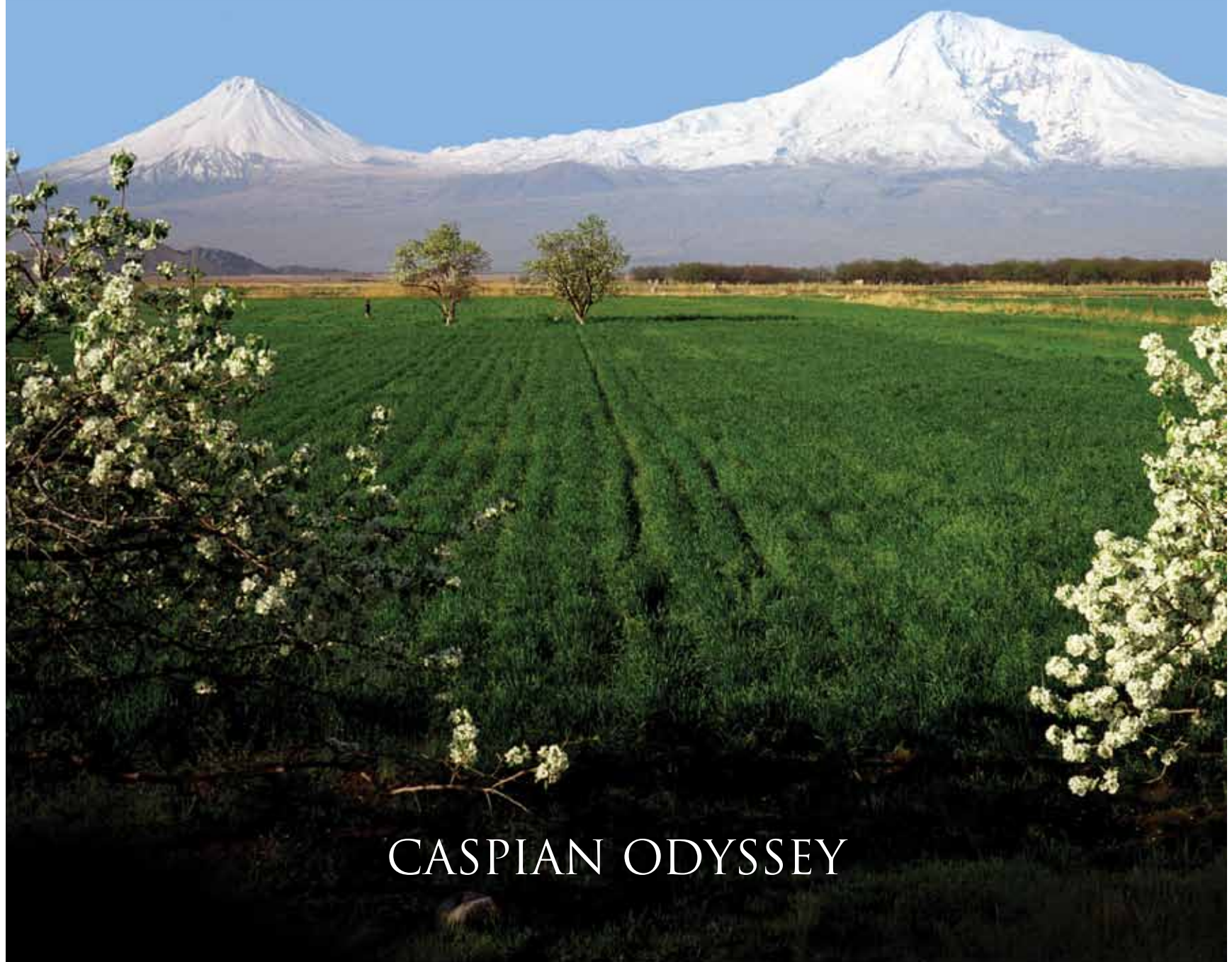




GOLDEN EAGLE LUXURY TRAINS

VOYAGES OF A LIFETIME BY PRIVATE TRAIN™



CASPIAN ODYSSEY



Mount Ararat



GOLDEN EAGLE CASPIAN ODYSSEY

YEREVAN – LAKE SEVAN – TBILISI – GORI – UPLISTSIKHE – MTSKHETA – BAKU
CROSS THE CASPIAN SEA – ASHGABAT – DARVAZA GAS CRATER – KHIVA
BUKHARA – SAMARKAND – TASHKENT – ALMATY



Explore the countries on both the eastern and western shores of the Caspian Sea – Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. With their location at the crossroads of trade, religion, language and the arts, these countries are home to fascinating modern cultures as well as some of the world's most ancient and timeless architecture.

From our starting point in the historic Armenian capital of Yerevan, we begin our captivating exploration of two halves by exploring the beauty and rich history of the South Caucasus as we weave through Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Bounded by the Black Sea to the west and Caspian Sea to the east and the Caucasian Mountains to the north with stunning scenery all around, this journey promises to be a unique adventure, all experienced from the comfort of our private luxury train. From the South Caucasus we then cross the Caspian Sea from Baku and continue along the great trading posts of the Silk Road in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, before arriving into our final destination of Almaty.

The Caspian Odyssey is a breathtakingly beautiful and remarkable journey as we discover the mysteries, diversity and traditions of this part of the world.

GOLDEN EAGLE CASPIAN ODYSSEY



TOUR SCHEDULES

2014 SCHEDULE

October 15 – October 30

2015 SCHEDULE

March 24 – April 8
October 15 – October 30

TOUR INCLUDES

1 night in Yerevan | 11 nights onboard the *Golden Eagle* (12 nights for ferry option)
1 night in Baku | 1 night in Ashgabat (flight option only) | 1 night in Almaty

DAILY TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrive Yerevan	Day 9	Ashgabat
Day 2	Yerevan	Day 10	Onboard, visit Darvaza Gas Crater
Day 3	Lake Sevan & Dilijan	Day 11	Khiva
Day 4	Tbilisi	Day 12	Bukhara
Day 5	Tbilisi & Telavi	Day 13	Samarkand
Day 6	Gori, Uplistsikhe, Mtskheta	Day 14	Tashkent
Day 7	Baku	Day 15	Almaty
Day 8	Cross Caspian Sea	Day 16	Depart Almaty

YEREVAN – LAKE SEVAN – TBILISI – GORI – UPLISTSIKHE – MTSKHETA – BAKU - CROSS THE CASPIAN SEA – ASHGABAT
DARVAZA GAS CRATER – KHIVA - BUKHARA - SAMARKAND – TASHKENT – ALMATY



Georgia



Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

“
*Every day delivered a new
experience, beyond anything
we could have imagined and
it was a great privilege to
have been able to see so much.*
”

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Geghard Monastery

YEREVAN

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ

ARMENIA

The Yerevan skyline is dominated by Mount Ararat in nearby Turkey, with its snow covered peak towering in the distance. Yerevan has a rich history and was occupied as early as 6,000 BC. The fortress of Erebuni was erected there in the 8th century BC. Seized by a succession of conquerors, the city later passed back and forth between the Turks and the Persians until 1827, when it was taken by Russia. It became the capital of Soviet Armenia in 1920 and following the demise of the Soviet Union, the capital of the new nation of Armenia.

On arrival we stay for one night at the centrally-located Armenia Marriott hotel, or similar. Why not extend your stay in Yerevan with additional nights before the tour to explore more of the city at your leisure?

Our touring will take us 23 miles (37 km) out of Yerevan to the ancient Geghard Monastery. The beautiful monastery contains a number of churches and tombs, many of them cut into the rock. The complex of

medieval architecture is set into a landscape of great natural beauty, surrounded by towering cliffs at the head of the Azat Valley.

We'll also visit the 1st century pagan temple of Garni, built to worship the Sun God Mitra. We'll explore the remains of an ancient fortress, palace and baths there. Back in Yerevan city we'll visit the Cascade giant stairway and inside it the Casfejian Museum of Modern Art.

In the evening we board our *Golden Eagle* private train and start our adventure to Almaty.

GUEST SPEAKER ANNOUNCEMENT

Major JGH Corrigan MBE Caspian Odyssey – October 2014

Guest speaker and military historian Major JGH Corrigan MBE will travel onboard the Golden Eagle on our spectacular rail journey though the South Caucasus and along the Silk Road. Major Corrigan will bring to life, through a series of informed lectures, the rich tapestry of history the region has witnessed through the ages.



Lake Sevan

LAKE SEVAN & DILIJAN

Մեանա լիճ ևս Դիլիջան

ARMENIA

Our train takes a scenic route today around the stunning Lake Sevan and we make a short stop to walk to the beach for a photo opportunity. Along with Lake Van and Lake Urmia, Sevan was considered one of the three great lakes of the historical Armenian Kingdom, collectively referred to as the Seas of Armenia; it is the only one within the boundaries of today's Republic of Armenia.

We'll continue to Dilijan to visit the nearby Monastery of Haghpat, built between the 10th and 14th centuries. Its beautiful location in dense wood in the gorges of two small mountain rivers make an atmospheric backdrop for St. Astvatsatsin Church, its most important building.

We'll have an Armenian cognac reception at Avan Dzoraget Hotel on the Debed River, nestled among the forest-covered hills and rocky slopes of the Caucasus Mountains.



SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

- 🦅 Taste Armenian Cognac
- 🦅 Private performance of Georgian polyphonic singing at Uplistsikhe Cave City
- 🦅 Darvaza Burning Gas Crater lights up the night sky in the Kara Kum desert
- 🦅 Evening drinks reception on the beautifully lit Registan Square, Samarkand
- 🦅 See the world's oldest Koran in Tashkent

TBILISI & TELAVI

თბილისი და თელავი

GEORGIA

Heading into Georgia, we visit Tbilisi. Hemmed in by the Surami Range, the city extends for 17 miles (27 km) along the banks of the River Kura. Despite the wars and fires which caused innumerable changes in the topography of Tbilisi, the old part of the city still retains much of its original layout, a spider's web of narrow winding streets and alleyways.

Historical sites we visit include the 13th century Metekhi church, a cross cupola church which forms part of the Royal Residential



complex, and the 5th century Sioni Cathedral, the main church of Tbilisi. We'll also visit the recently built Holy Trinity Cathedral, one of the largest Orthodox churches in the world and take a walking tour of the old town and Rustaveli Avenue. Here we will see the Great Hall of the Georgian Philharmonia, built in 1969-71, which has been acknowledged as one of the finest public buildings since the Second World War. We'll see the treasures of the city housed in the Janashia Museum of Georgia.

We also explore the beautiful Kakheti region, which borders the Great Caucasus Mountain range. This region is known as a birthplace of Georgian viticulture and wine-making. We tour the Tsinandali country estate of the Alexandre Chavchavadze family with a marvellous garden, house-museum, park and winery dating back to the 19th century, located near Telavi, a couple of hours' drive from Tbilisi.



GORI, UPLISTSIKHE CAVE CITY & MTSKHETA

გორი, უფლისციხე და მცხეთა

GEORGIA

Gori is one of the oldest cities in Georgia, founded in the 7th century AD as Tontio. Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader, was born here in 1879 and he spent his childhood years in the city and later (1888-94) studied at its theological seminary. The small house where Stalin was born is preserved under a canopy outside the huge columned palace-like building that houses the Stalin Museum. To the side of the museum is Stalin's private railway carriage. The museum is filled with interesting photographs of the man responsible for more deaths and suffering than any other human being. From the town we will go directly to Uplistsikhe where we will have a private performance of traditional Georgian polyphonic singing.



The famous cave city of Uplistsikhe dates from the 6th century BC and is first mentioned in the chronicles of the 1st century AD. Carved into rocky plateau we find huge echoing halls, meandering corridor-streets, chambers for pagan worship and even the remains of Georgia's oldest theatre, complete with auditorium, stage and orchestra pit. Like the other cave-towns of Georgia, it is rooted in the prehistoric traditions of the peoples of the Near East. On one side the fortress was protected by the Mtkvari and an almost vertical rock face, on the other, by powerful fortifications. Its strategic position on the approaches to Gori and, in particular, its strong defences made it possible to control the surrounding terrain. There were numerous attempts to destroy Uplistsikhe. Only in the 13th century, however, did the hordes of Genghis Khan's son Khulagu succeed in doing so, after capturing and destroying many fortresses in Transcaucasia with the help of siege machines. The 5,000 inhabitants of Uplistsikhe perished and life ended forever in the fortress.

Late afternoon we visit the city of Mtskheta, Georgia's Old Capital. Due to its historical significance and numerous ancient monuments, Mtskheta became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.



BAKU

BAKY

AZERBAIJAN

Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, lies on the western shore of the Caspian Sea and the southern side of the Apsheron Peninsula, around the wide, curving sweep of the Bay of Baku. The bay, sheltered by the islands of the Baku Archipelago, provides the best harbour of the Caspian Sea, while the Apsheron Peninsula gives protection from violent northerly winds. Baku derives its international importance from its huge oil industry. The core of present-day Baku is the Old Town, or fortress, of Icheri-Shekher. Most of the walls, strengthened after the Russian conquest in 1806, survive, as does the 90 ft (27 m) tower of Kyz-Kalasy (Maiden Tower, 12th century). The walled old town is highly picturesque, with its maze of narrow alleys and ancient buildings. These include the Palace of the Shirvan-Shahs, now a museum, the oldest part of which dates from the 11th century. Also of the 11th century is the Synyk-Kala Minaret and Mosque (1078-79).



Ashgabat

Other notable historic buildings are the Law Court (Divan-Khan), the Dzhuma-Mechet Minaret, and the mausoleum of the astronomer Seida Bakuvi. Around the walls of the fortress, the regular streets and imposing buildings of modern Baku rise up the slopes of the amphitheatre of hills surrounding the bay.

We will offer an alternative tour to Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. Located 40 miles (64 km) from Baku on the west bank of the Caspian Sea, Gobustan is an outstanding archaeological site of more than 6,000 pre-historic rock engravings. The area also features the remains of inhabited caves, settlements and burials.

Overnight we stay at the five-star Hilton, Baku, or similar, while our train is loaded on the ferry.

CROSS THE CASPIAN SEA BY FERRY OR PLANE

FROM AZERBAIJAN TO TURKMENISTAN

Early morning our train is loaded onto a cargo ferry for a 12-14 hour crossing of the Caspian Sea from Baku to the town of Turkmenbashi. Formerly known as Krasnovodsk, it is the western terminus of oil and natural gas pipelines and of the Trans-Caspian Railway, which links the Caspian region with central Asia.

The cargo ferry has limited passenger facilities with basic cabins and catering, and the adventurous amongst the group can choose to travel on the ferry with our train. Upon arrival at the port at Turkmenbashi our train will be offloaded and you will travel overnight to Ashgabat (this option needs to be requested at the time of booking the tour).

Alternatively you can fly from Baku directly to Ashgabat. Overnight we stay at Oguzkent Sofitel.

ASHGABAT

АШХАБАД

TURKMENISTAN

Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan is known as the 'Las Vegas of the Kara Kum'. Situated between the Kara Kum desert and the Kopet Dag mountain range, Ashgabat is a relatively modern city built upon the ruins of the Silk Road city of Konjikala and the Soviet city built after the devastating earthquake of 1948.

The city's extravagant fountains, golden domes and towering modern buildings appear strangely incongruous in this desert setting. Highlights on our visit include a trip to the National Museum and Kipchak Mosque.



Darvaza

DARVAZA BURNING GAS CRATER

Газовый Кратер Дарваза

TURKMENISTAN

The *Golden Eagle* makes a brief scheduled stop at Ichoguz, where we have the option to leave the train and make a short journey to Darvaza's famous burning gas crater, a spectacular sight best seen at night. Located in the middle of the Kara Kum desert where the area is rich in natural gas, the 70 metre-wide crater is known by the locals as the 'Door to Hell' and has been burning for over 40 years. A unique experience that is not to be missed.

KHIVA

ХИВА

UZBEKISTAN

Our train travels towards Urgench, from where we transfer to the ancient city of Khiva, founded 2,500 years ago. As one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts and now a World Heritage Site, it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia. A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. Stepping back in time, we discover its impressive mosques, bazaars and minarets within Khiva's ancient walls.

BUKHARA

БУХАРА

UZBEKISTAN

Bukhara is quite simply outstanding. Like Khiva, UNESCO sponsored the renovation of much of the city for its 2,500th anniversary in 1999. The most enjoyable aspect of this city is to just immerse oneself in the atmosphere of this unique and ancient city and re-live some of its fascinating history at the crossroads of Asia. The main highlight of this wonderful tour is a visit to The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara – the despotic and ruthless leaders who ruled until Soviet times. We then travel out of the city to experience the Emir's enchantingly named, 'Palace of the Moon and Stars'.

SAMARKAND

САМАРКАНД

UZBEKISTAN

Just the mention of Samarkand instantly conjures up evocative images of the Silk Road, more so than any other town. Founded in the 6th century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture hints at its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia and is particularly noted for its architectural remains from the 14th to the 17th century, when it flourished as the fabled capital of the Mongol empire of Timur and his successors.

Today we will visit some of its most significant sites including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Ulug Beg observatory, one of the earliest Islamic astronomical observatories built in 1428. Before dinner we will return to the now illuminated and awe-inspiring Registan Square.



Juma Mosque, Khiva

TASHKENT

ТАШКЕНТ

UZBEKISTAN

Tashkent is the capital city of Uzbekistan and we spend time touring this modern Soviet-style city which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966. Our tour of the city includes the Old Town, where traditional homes and religious buildings line the narrow streets and here in a small library we'll be privileged to see one of Islam's most sacred relics – the world's oldest Koran. This is followed by a visit to the Railway Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts.

ALMATY

АЛМА-АТЫ

KAZAKHSTAN

We will take a tour of Almaty including a visit to Panfilov Park, located in the heart of the city, and home to the Zenkov Cathedral, a 19th century Russian Orthodox Church made entirely of wood. Overnight we stay in the InterContinental hotel, or similar, before transferring to Almaty Airport to begin your journey home.



Zenkov Cathedral, Almaty