Batumi / Black Sea / İstanbul / Rize / Trabzon

Lazland (Black Sea) Highlights



Tour code: IB-TR-017

Duration: 5 days

From €2,999.00 / person

Starting point: İstanbul

Languages: English

Overview

Unearth Turkey’s most unspoilt corner of lush green canyons, rivers, waterfalls, tea plantations and Alpine forests.

Turkey's Black Sea coast

doesn't hide its treasures from the world.

Every day will bring new insights and new beauties to behold.

Your itinerary

DAY 1 TRABZON CITY CLASSICS

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Trabzon. Turkey's Black Sea coast is surprising in many ways; Alpine forests, lush greenery of the mountain slopes, rivers and waterfalls, tea plantations, fresh fish off the sea, world's oldest cherry orchards, billions of hazelnuts (most likely that the hazelnuts in your Nutella, chocolate bar or hazelnut-flavored coffee come from). Trabzon is the coast's prime destination, has been around since at least 746 BC and a great base for visiting surrounding sites. If your time in Turkey is limited, the easiest way to visit Trabzon is by plane, 1064 km or 665 miles east of Istanbul.

Start your day at well-preserved 13th-century monastic church of Hagia Sophia, dedicated as a museum in 1964 and re-converted to a mosque in July 2103, home to some of Anatolia’s most outstanding frescoes. Before you rush inside, take a moment to study the finely sculpted, frieze illustrating Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Hop on board for a panoramic sightseeing drive for awesome views; the impressive Citadel of Trabzon, set on a hilltop overlooking the city below, Zagnos Bridge and Valley, pleasing central square in Ortahisar, home of the most powerful and longest-serving Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent. A successful military leader, he gained territory in Europe, Africa and Asia, which helped define his reign as ‘Golden Age of the Empire’. Lots of places in the city named after his name and his sultana Roxelana aka Hurrem Sultan. Find out why Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I deserved the nickname from your guide. Botanic Garden, Gulbahar Hatun Mosque and Shrine, daughter of Mehmet the Conqueror, 7th ruler of the Empire, from the famous siege of Constantinople in 1453 at age of 21. Filling your trip with tips, local insight, and fun.

We head to Sera Lake and take a break to enjoy a delicious lunch of Black Sea’s cuisine at a local restaurant, full of mouth-watering dishes, rich in cheese and smothered in butter. Clip on your helmet and — following a full safety briefing, opt to enjoy a leisurely sea-bike ride. Stopping at Ataturk's Mansion blindingly white high in the hills, built for Konstantin Kabayanidis , a wealthy Greek banking family in the Black Sea style popular in the Crimea. Ataturk stayed here during visits to the city in 1930 and 1937, and the house became a museum in 1943. It's believed he wrote part of his will here. Much of the original furniture remains in place, now a favorite venue for formal wedding photograph session. Return to your hotel before we enjoy panoramic view and taste Turkish tea in Boztepe observation deck.. Overnight Trabzon. (L)

DAY 2 UZUNGOL LAKE, LAZLAND, TEA FACTORY AND TASTING

The territory of the Laz, the Black Sea’s most-famous minority ethnic group, who have migrated from Batumi following the Ottoman-Russia War in 1877–78. The people of Caucasian origin sharing similar roots with Abkhazia and Georgia today, descendants of the ancient Kingdom of Colchis, which you may be familiar with from the Golden Fleece myth.

Perfect introduction tour to the culturally rich and incredibly scenic strip of territory that recall Switzerland. We will take a 1-hr drive to see a Black Sea Tea Factory to see how tea is made step-by-step and enjoy a cup or two afterwards. We will be greeted by a food engineer and provided an informative introduction about long and in-depth process of the tea.

After we learn all about tea and how to brew, drive through valleys and canyons to the village and lake of Uzungol, formed by a landslide - the lake made by nature is a gift to Trabzon. We will plenty of free time to explore, partake in optional activities such as paragliding or paddle sea-bicycle before going to the outdoor sky deck - Seyir Terasi. Here you may be lucky to spot a Eurasian lynx, roe deer, badger, or one of many various species of birds of prey.

Enjoy a delicious lunch of Turkish cuisine at a local restaurant right by the lake with the high rise sloping mountains and dense surrounding forests. Hapsiyas Kiremitli Kopru, discover the charm of an old bridge over troubled water. Modern Turkish knives are the legacy of a long and proud history, hailing from the traditional craft of sword-making. You will also have the chance to visit a traditional Surmene knife shop, where the raw blades arrive directly from the blacksmith. They're also often more decorative than other types of knives, with intricate designs and embellishments. Overnight Trabzon. (B, L)

DAY 3 GEORGIA OR TURKEY

Today you can choose an optional day trip to the Georgian city of Batumi or Turkish highland valley of Ayder. The choice of excursion is yours. Overnight Trabzon. (B, L)

ART & ARCHITECTURAL MELTING POT: GEORGIAN BATUMI
Locked between Russia, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia is most visited country in the South Caucasus and long attracted visitors from neighbouring countries – and there's really no wonder. Fronted by the calm waters of the Black Sea, vintage appeal, rich culture and astonishingly diverse landscapes makes coastal city of Batumi an ideal destination for anyone loving history and nature with a backdrop of mist-wrapped hills on the grandest of scales.

Today we will follow the winding Black Sea’s coastal road to Batumi in Georgia approx. 200km/125 miles to the northeast, with lush greenery of the mountain slopes, meadow and fruit orchards on one side and calm wavy waters of the Black Sea on the other. Entering from Turkish-Georgian

border-crossing point at Sarp and driving further 1,5 km or few minutes after border crossing, we arrive at the Sculpture and Waterfall of St. Andrew the First-Called Apostle. May 12 is an official holiday in Georgia and marks the day that the Apostle Andrew the First-Called arrived in Georgia, in present-day Ajara region. Born in Bethsaida on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee.

Passing through rural villages, fruit orchards and eucalyptus trees towards Gonio Fortress and visit Mausoleum of Saint Matthias with an chapel, widely rumoured to be the burial site of the Apostle. Participation of the Imperial Russian Navy to help Greeks against the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Navarino (The last major fleet action of the sailing-ship era) in the afternoon of October 20, 1827 resulted with another war between Ottoman and Russian Empires and allowed Russia to annex some regions of modern-day Georgia including Batumi. Have the chance witness historical moment and snap photos at Gonio Fortress last-time used by Ottoman Empire during the period of war

From one famous site to another! Built between 1898-1903, Neo-Gothic style Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary originally constructed as an Roman Catholic Church and used as a transformer substation during Soviet reign.

Adjara State Museum of Art, Georgia's achievements in fine arts are displayed across two floors in this vast neoclassical space.The downstairs is dedicated to contemporary post-1950 Georgian artists llike Amiran Parqosadze, Bela Bolkvadze, and Rusudan Petviashvili, while the upper level holds the perhaps less striking permanent collection of paintings, graphics, woodcuts, ceramics, and sculpture by both Georgian and Western artists.

A nice lunch will be served in a quaint local restaurant before taking off to the 112-year-old, world’s second largest botanic garden brings to life nine geographical areas with over 5,000 different species of plants over 274 acres. Located 10km north of Batumi on Green Cape. The compact city center of Batumi is full of parks, gardens statues and stunning sights. This guided tour takes you on a walking tour of Poseidon Statue, Opera and Ballet House, Astronomical Clock, grandeur of Piazza and Europe Squares and much more!

or

AYDER
Start your day with a pickup from your hotel and we drive along Turkey's Black Sea coast to Ayder, stopping enroute to visit large collection of regional Feretiko textile products. This lightweight local fabric of Rize absorbs moisture easily, one of the best summer materials for clothing and home textile. Our second spot is Firtina Vadisi or Storm Valley – where you can partake in optional outdoor activites or relax at your own pace. The choice is yours.

Located 19 km/12 miles in the southeast of main town Camlihemsin and 167 km/104 miles/2.5 hrs drive in the southeast of Trabzon – Ayder, a Turkish alpine village

perched on the slopes of the Kackar Mountains in the city of Rize, known for its curative hot-springs, refreshing mountain air, high mountain pastures, evergreen trees and cascading streams of chill water. We will plenty of free time to explore and we enjoy a delicious lunch of Black Sea’s cuisine at a local restaurant.

On the way back to your hotel, we drive through the canyons and valleys and see fat dairy cattle munch lush grass and produce the country's best milk and butte, tea gardens and nearly two dozen well-preserved stone bridges dating back to the Ottoman era, gracefully arching over the Fırtına River.

DAY 4 ALTINDERE NATIONAL PARK: SUMELA MONASTERY, KARACA CAVE, GLASS TERRACE & HAMSIKOY

Perfect introduction tour in the footsteps of Byzantine Emperors and Ottoman Sultans in incredibly scenic strip of territory that recall Switzerland. A 45 minutes scenic drive with fantastic views of tea gardens, lush greenery of the mountain slopes, billions of hazelnuts, rivers and waterfalls as we journey inland to the modern town of Macka downtown. Enroute stopping for a short visit at the Karadag Waterfall and have the chance to snap great photos of Sumela Monastery at Observation Deck.

The 1000-year-old Monastery of the Virgin Mary at Sumela in the serene ambiance of Altindere National Park is among the most impressive sights of Turkey’s Black Sea coast. The tour will take you on a pleasant 15-minute hike to the monastery. It’s undoubtedly one of the best hikes in Turkey – if not the best. If you only have time to do one hike, then this should be it. Clinging to the side of a sheer cliff nearly a thousand feet, the Sumela Monastery also known as Meryem Ana, which is Mother Mary in Turkish. It’s frescoes depicting The Creation of the Earth, The Creation of Adam and Eve, and Frescoes of Jesus, his apostles and Holy Mother Mary’s life. It’s not just the monastery itself that is the attraction, it’s the entire expedition to see it: the monastery’s alpine setting, clinging to a sheer rock cliff in the midst of dense evergreen forests loud with the splash of chill mountain streams, comes as a surprise for those who think of Turkey as a land of rolling steppe.

Following this spiritual journey, our path winds along the captivating Black sea Forests, offering breathtaking views, until we reach Karaca Cave and visit fascinating stalactites and stalagmites, and many unusual cave plants. It is scientifically said that the air of the cave is good for asthma patients. These caves were originally a study point for those in the Black Sea Technical University to study the different types of minerals and rocks. Now, this natural wonder is open to the public with easy-to-navigate walkways and comfortable lighting, it is a true pleasure to see what nature can do underground.

As you travel you will cross through these regions however one of the most interesting is the Zigana Pass, located in the Pontic Mountains. The mountains here are named after a group of Greeks that are descendants from the original colonists. Head to 240-meter-high Torul Castle and Observation Glass Terrace, The terrace is the highest viewing terrace in Turkey and it overlooks the most beautiful natural views of city of Torul with its beautiful mountains, plains, river and castle, but access to terrace requires great courage. Following the old Silk Road, we set out for Hamsikoy. This peaceful region is made up of 5 villages that have grown and worked together. Farming is a prominent business here but with the freshest ingredients and traditional recipes, they make some of the best rice pudding called ‘sutlac’.

Evening transfer to the airport and return flight back to Istanbul. Tour ends where we began with an airport to hotel transfer. Opportunity to finish up your sightseeing or get in some last minute shopping at your own pace. Our tour draws to a close and we say goodbye to our new friends.

Please note that check-out time from the hotel is normally noon, but luggage storage facilities are available. We are able to organise extra post-trip accommodation and day tours/activities if you wish to extend your stay. Happy travels! (B, L)

(B – Breakfast, L –Lunch, D –Dinner)

Good to know

Enjoy a memorable journey through the Black Sea and Batumi, combining breathtaking landscapes, cultural discoveries, historic landmarks, and unique local experiences.

Plan your journey

Contact our team for dates, availability and a personalised quote.

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