

Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk - İngiliz Derneği



The Anglo Turkish Association of Northern Cyprus

Dates indicated are Draft Dates for guidance only, with actual tour dates confirmed closer to the actual indicated draft dates for the tour. All tours will only be undertaken if TRNC & Turkish Government Regulations can be complied with. Tours are subject to change should circumstances arise.

ATA Organised TOUR for SEPTEMBER 2022

A guided tour to the Azerbaijan – 6th to 13th September (actual dates to be confirmed)



Azerbaijan, the nation and former Soviet republic, is bounded by the Caspian Sea and Caucasus Mountains, which span Asia and Europe. Its capital, Baku, is famed for its medieval walled Inner City. Billing itself as the 'Land of Fire', Azerbaijan (Azərbaycan) is a tangle of contradictions and contrasts.

Neither Europe nor Asia, it's a nexus of ancient historical empires, but also a 'new' nation which has undergone an extraordinary transformation from the war-ravaged post-Soviet 1990s to an oil-enriched host

of Formula 1 and Europa League football.

Its capital, Baku, is famed for its medieval walled Inner City. Within the Inner City lies the Palace of the Shirvanshahs, a royal retreat dating to the 15th century, and the centuries-old stone Maiden Tower, which dominates the city skyline. The cosmopolitan capital, Baku, rings a Unesco-listed ancient core with dazzling 21st-century architecture and sits on a balmy bay of the Caspian Sea. In the surrounding semi-desert are mud volcanoes and curious fire phenomena.

It's known as the 'City of Winds', but while Azerbaijan's capital is indeed among the world's breeziest, the nickname can also be applied to its eclectic architectural landscape, shaped as it has been by the various winds of change that have swept through Baku over the centuries.



From its medieval fortifications to the lavish palaces commissioned during the city's first oil boom, Soviet-era relics to post-modern skyscrapers, Baku's architecture is, for many travelers, the top reason to visit this quirky Caspian Sea city.

Here's where to experience the four major periods that define its architectural legacy.

Two millennia ago, Baku was a major center of Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion known for its fire temples. It's during this period that construction is thought to have begun on the 29m-high Maiden's Tower, Baku's foremost cultural icon and a great first stop on a self-guided architectural tour of the city. Fortified in the 12th century, when Baku was the capital of the historical region of Shirvan, the sandstone tower



(which is thought to have once been used a Zoroastrianism fire temple) now forms part of Baku's Old City.



While the restoration of Baku's compact historic quarter at the turn of the 21st century can perhaps be described as overzealous, the 15th-century Palace of the Shirvanshahs with its attractive murqarna (stalactite vault) doorways and moody mausoleums still offers a fascinating glimpse into an era of Baku characterised by endless conflicts between the Persians, Ottomans and Imperial Russia. In 1918, the Bolsheviks left their own mark on the Palace by firing rounds into an ancient sandstone wall near the entrance; the bullet holes are still visible today.

Breaking from the rigid style that dominated the twilight years of USSR architecture, the fluid wave-shaped Heydar Əliyev Centre (opened in 2012) was designed by the late Iraqi-born architect Zaha Hadid to express the optimism of a nation looking to the future. Hot on its heels was the 2013 opening of the Flame Towers. Inspired by Baku's history (Baku means 'protector of fire' in Persian) and ongoing connection with natural gas, its trio of sinuous towers appear to flicker at night thanks to an integrated LED system.

In Baku visits will include, the Medieval Caravanserais, Juma & Sinyg Mosques, Maiden Tower, Heydar Aliyev Centre and Shirvanshakhs Palace.



Yet barely three hours' drive away, timeless rural villages lie amid lush orchards backed by the soaring Great Caucasus Mountains. Come quickly.

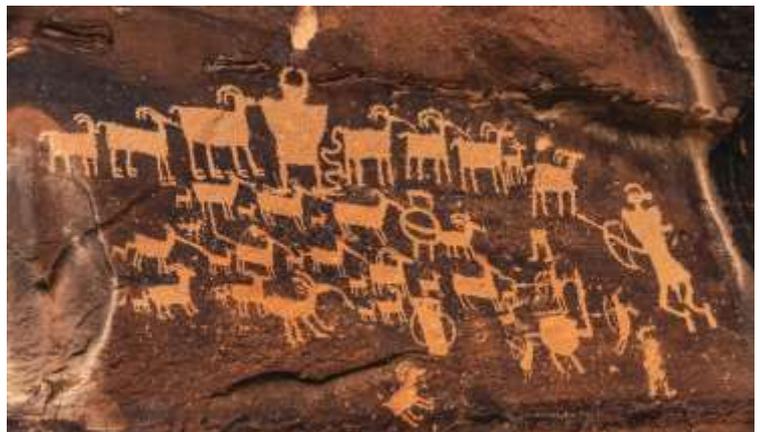
In the Absheron Peninsula you will see the 'Burning Mountain' Yanar Dag (a hill located on top of a pocket of natural gas which constantly erupts into flames), and Markadan Castle.

In Gobustan visits include the 'Petroglyphs' a kind of art 'archive' of human evolution on the Earth and the Bibi-Heybat Mosque.

In Shamakhi, Lahij and Gabala visits include the Juma Mosque, Mausoleum of the 'Seven Domes'. A cable car climb to Nohur Lake and Chukur the underground city.

In Sheki visits include the Palace of Sheki Khans, Shebeke (Traditional art workshops) Albanian Church in Kish Village, the Two-Story Caravanserail and Museum of History.

Having long been overlooked by visitors, Azerbaijan's new easy visas, bargain-value hotels and close-packed range of beautiful landscapes are starting to attract significant flows of tourists, though as yet few of them from Western countries. If ever there was a place to leave you mesmerized and spellbound it is Azerbaijan and Baku in particular, people go here not knowing what to expect and leave awe inspired by its magical beauty, cleanliness and by the most hospitable of people imaginable.



If you can only go on one Tour in a lifetime go on this one!

A tour itinerary will be published on the association Website and Facebook Group + Page once actual dates and costs are confirmed.

Please note this tour was originally scheduled to have taken place in 2020 & 2021, and because of previous interest available places on the tour will sell out very quickly!



Descriptions of all Tours are done so using poetic journalistic license and should not be assumed to be a detailed description or itinerary of any particular Tour, rather a '*wetting the imagination*'. Detailed information on all Tours will be emailed to members in sufficient time prior to the actual Tour to enable informed decisions made as to if the Tours of interest to you. For more information on any of our Tours in 2022 please email our Tours Organiser; contact details can be found on the committee members page and tours page of our website.