Nestled in the Caucasus Mountains east of the Black Sea are the charming and fascinating countries of Armenia and Georgia.

Armenia is one of the oldest countries in the world, with an historical record since 3,500 B.C., and was one of the earliest countries to develop a written language and Christianity. It is nestled in the highlands surrounding the Biblical mountains of Ararat, and has many unique species of plants.

Georgia edges the eastern shore of the Black Sea, at the crossroads of Asia and Eastern Europe. Christianity was adopted in the 4th century and this common belief helped unify the country. The Kingdom of Georgia reached its Golden Age during the reign of King David IV and Queen Tamar in the 12th and early 13th centuries. Both countries achieved independence in 1991.

Our journey will take us on adventures to spectacular natural areas, botanic gardens, to visit the pagan Temple of Garni, and ancient monasteries. We will see extraordinary mountain peaks, monasteries perched on mountain tops, ancient cities and villages, and enjoy dinner in a family home for a rich cultural experience.

With leadership by botanical expert Anna Asatryan in Armenia and excellent local guides, you will have a memorable and fascinating adventure!

We invite you to join us!

Best Regards,

Margaret M. Betchart
President, Betchart Expeditions Inc.
Days 1/2  Boston to Armenia
Depart Boston’s Logan International Airport for Armenia (with one stop en route) arriving the next evening. Transfer to your hotel (4 nights).

Day 3  Yerevan, Armenia - Garni Temple
Today, we’ll explore the wonderful Garni Temple, the last existing Hellenistic temple in Armenia and the UNESCO World Heritage Geghard monastery built in the IV-XIII centuries. See tree plantations left from Soviet times and stop by Charents arch, one of the Important Plant Areas (IPA) of Armenia, to enjoy a fascinating view of biblical Ararat Mountain and the foothills of Ararat Valley. We will drive through villages rich in fruit gardens. Stop for lunch at a private house in Garni. Enjoy delicious homemade dishes and have a walk in the garden. Learn about “Armenia—a bread country,” the wild cereals found here and local bread cooking traditions that have survived until our days.

Day 4  Yerevan Botanic Garden, Armenia Academy of Sciences
This morning, we will visit Yerevan Botanical Garden of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences, which is responsible for plant collections in Armenia. It includes 200 species of endemic or rare plants and provides a location for the study of ecological interactions of species in a relatively natural environment. Also visit the Institute of Hydroponics to learn about their work with soil-less cultivation of plants and development of technologies for their growth.

Arrive at the Museum of Nature where we will learn about the natural heritage of Armenia, its geography, geology, and biodiversity and cap this off with a visit to a brandy factory!

Day 5  Ancient foods and Manuscripts & Mt. Aragatz
Today we will head north for exploration of the slopes of Mount Aragatz (4,095 m), an Important Plant
Area of Armenia (IPA), and the highest mountain in the country. We will stop at different altitudes, including at Amberd Fortress, and in the alpine zone near snowline. We will look for intriguing steppe and meadow plants, including endemics of Aragatz. In the afternoon return to Yerevan to visit the central food market, and the “Matenadaran” Museum and Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, with one of the world’s richest depositories of medieval manuscripts and books.

**Day 6  Ararat Valley & Noravank Monastery**

We will depart for Khor Virap – a monastery and pilgrimage site, located in Ararat Valley just a few kilometers from the biblical Ararat Mountain in Turkey. The site is linked with the name of Gregori the Illuminator and history of adoption of Christianity in Armenia. At Surenavan village we will observe storks on their nests, which are common to this area and enjoy the Ararat Valley. We will also see the XIII-XIV century Noravank monastery complex. Hotel in Village Hermon (2 nights).

**Day 7  Hermon & Herher Sanctuary**

Today we will enjoy the amazing landscape of Vayots Dzor province, with a focus on the area near the beautiful small village of Herher. This Important Plant Area is far from the main road and has a remarkable diversity of habitats and plants. Our target will be the wild sanctuary of Herher which are known for huge genetic diversity of wild pears (the trees should be in bloom) including a few local endemics, including iris and tulips. Lunch in a private home. Then return to Hermon.

**Day 8  Selim Pass - Artanish Peninsula - Dilijan Town**

This morning, we will cross Selim Pass and see the medieval Caravansarai from the ancient Silk Road. Arrive at Sevan Lake, the largest high mountain freshwater lake in the Caucasus and one of the largest in the world. Drive along the NE shore of Sevan Lake towards the Artanish Peninsula, one of the most interesting sites of “Sevan” National Park. Also visit Sevan Botanical Garden, the high mountain branch of Yerevan Botanical Garden. Have a picnic lunch then visit the SE shore of Sevan, another IPA of Armenia. Explore gorges on the peninsula, then overnight in Dilijan town (2 nights).

**Day 9  Pambak Mountains & Dillijan College & Molokan villages**

Today, we will visit one of the most beautiful sites of Sevan Lake basin - the meadow flora of the eastern extremity of the Pambak Mountains. After lunch in a private home in Dilijan, visit one of the most ambitious educational projects in Armenia, UWC Dilijan college http://uwedilijan.org/about-us/uwc-dilijan/mission-and-values. We will also stop by one of the Molokan 19th century Russian villages.

**Day 10  Dilijan - Vanadzor & Stepanavan town to Tibilisi, Georgia**

We will drive north via Vanadzor and Stepanavan town. The route is very lush and
Day 11  National Botanic Garden of Georgia & Ancient Capital of Mtskheta

We will head for the National Botanical Garden of Georgia this morning, situated in the Tsavkisis-Tskali Gorge of the Sololaki Range. Have an introduction to the ecology and flora of the Caucasus by the Director of the Institute of Botany, and explore the garden. This is the leading research and conservation organization in Georgia. It was first established as a royal botanical garden in the 17th Century. Nearby are remnants of ancient water pipelines, Queen Tamar’s bridge, and Narikala Fortress.

We will explore the ancient capital of Mtskheta this afternoon, which shows the superb artistic and cultural achievements by this ancient kingdom of the Caucasus.

Day 12  Kakhetia, Alavan River Valley & Lagodekhi National Park

We will venture today along the Wine Road and Georgian Military Road to Kakhetia and the Alazan River valley, center of the Georgian wine industry. Continue to the Lagodekhi National Park and Nature Reserve on the southern slopes of the Caucasus where we will explore trails and learn about the protected area. Dinner this evening at the private home of a Georgian farmer and wine maker. Learn about making Georgian bread, vodka and candles, and enjoy traditional songs.

Day 13  Kazbegi Mountain & Sameba Monastery

This will be a spectacular day as we drive in sight of 5,033m Kazbegi Mountain in the Caucasus and have an excursion near Sameba Monastery, which is situated on a mountain top at 2,200 m. Explore in 4 WD minibuses to cross the pass to the southern slope of the Caucasus Mountain Range for stunning views and look at the flora and ecology of the area.

Day 14  Borjomi-Kutaisi-Bakuriani Alpine Botanical Garden

We will depart for Borjomi, which is famous for its mineral waters, and visit the Museum. Then continue to the Bakuriani Alpine Botanical Garden which features Caucasian plants, including 125 species of trees and shrubs. The garden is situated at 1,650 m and specializes in high mountain flora of the Caucasus and conservation of rare, endangered, and endemic plants of Georgia. Also enjoy a shish kebab dinner en route to Kutaisi city, capital of the legendary Kolkhida area, well known in Greek mythology (1 night).

Day 15  Kutaisi

This morning, we will explore Kutaisi, once the capital of several historic kingdoms, and since
Yes! I/we want to explore Armenia & Georgia, May 24 - June 8, 2022, offered by Pacific Horticulture. Please reserve ____ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for $___________ ($1,000 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s) _____________________________________ Age_________

_______________________________________ Age_________

Address _____________________________________________________

City ________________________________ State ____ Zip ____________

Phone: Home (________) ______________________________________

Work (________) ______________________________________

Email Address ________________________________________________

Membership in Pacific Horticulture? ___ Yes ___ No

To participate in this tour, non-members must pay a fee of $50 per person. Please make a separate check payable to Pacific Horticulture.

Accommodations Preference:
___ Twin ___ Single Twin Share: ___ with a friend or
___ Nonsmoker ___ Smoker ___ assign a roommate

Signature ___________________________________ Date ____________

Signature ___________________________________ Date ____________

Responsibility

Betchart Expeditions Inc. and Pacific Horticulture act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels, and exercise every care possible. We can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident, or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, acts of God, terrorism, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or to cancel any tour prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. To participate in this tour, non-members must pay a fee of $50 per person. Please make a separate check payable to Pacific Horticulture.

Days 16/17 Batumi, Seaside City on the Black Sea & Home

A splendid view will await us today as we take the Argo Cable Car to the mountain top overlooking the seaside city of Batumi! We will explore Batumi including Europe Square and its sandy beaches on the Black Sea! We will also have a special visit to the Batumi Waterfall, and Batumi Botanical Garden (the largest subtropical botanical garden in the former USSR). Farewell dinner with traditional Georgian cuisine. Take return flights to the USA on day 17. Arrive home same day.

Please Mail To:
Armenia & Georgia 2022
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

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Discover Armenia & Georgia!
May 24 - June 8, 2022

Costs & Conditions

**Trip Fee:** $4,995 per person twin share, plus air fare of approximately $1,595 including tax from Boston to Armenia, with return from Georgia and a $350 donation to Pacific Horticulture.

**What to Expect:** This expedition is planned for the travel enthusiast who would enjoy exploring the fascinating natural and cultural heritage of the nations of Armenia and Georgia in the Caucasus Mountains. See extraordinary mountain peaks, monasteries perched on mountain tops, ancient cities and villages, museums with ancient manuscripts, and botanic gardens, and enjoy dinner in family homes for a rich cultural experience. Leadership by excellent local guides and experts will provide an exceptional experience.

Travel by motorcoach, with daily outings on foot of 1 to 2 miles at a leisurely pace suitable for exploring natural areas, ancient cities, and footpaths. Exploration requires some walking up and downhill. Please be prepared to actively explore on foot. This expedition is a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure and discovery, who relish the opportunity to discover the cultural and natural heritage of these two fascinating countries.

**Expedition Fee Includes:** Land transport; group airport transfers; accommodations in first class and country style hotels which reflect the heritage of the Caucasus; meals from breakfast on Day 3 to breakfast on Day 17; tips to drivers and local guides; group entrance fees; leadership and administration.

**Expedition Fee Does Not Include:** International air fare (quoted separately); independent airport transfers; gratuity to expedition leader; personal items such as alcoholic beverages; laundry, phone calls, bottled water, snacks, passport, or personal insurance.

**Air Fares:** For air flight information, please contact Taunya, (800) 252-4910. Air Fares are Subject to Change until Ticketed.

**Accommodations:** Are in first class or country style hotels which reflect the charm and heritage of Armenia and Georgia, and are well situated for visiting sites. We encourage singles to register on a “twin share” basis. Limited singles are available for a supplement of $895.

**Reservations, Deposits & Payments:**
Please mail a deposit of $1,000 per person to:

Armenia & Georgia 2022
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

Final payment is due 60 days before departure.

**Questions:** Please call Taunya DeYoung at Betchart Expeditions Inc.

Phone: (800) 252-4910
or (408) 252-4910
Fax: (408) 252-1444
Email: betcharttaunya@gmail.com
Look on the Web: www.betchartexpeditions.com

**Cancellations & Refunds:**
The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure, less a handling fee of $100 per person. There is no refund for any cancellation after the 60 day period unless your space can be resold; then a $100 per person handling fee applies. No refunds are made for unused services.