

RESOURCE LIST

The Treasures of Georgia

Led by Bruce Benson, Retired St. Olaf Pastor, and Carol Benson, Retired Music Teacher

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This list was compiled in the hopes that you would find it useful in preparing yourself for departure or in continuing the learning experience after you return home.

Guide Books

A guide book will go a long way in answering many of your general questions about what things to do and where to eat during your free time. It will also typically provide a few words and phrases, sometimes a tip on pronunciation, and other useful things such as tipping guidelines, how best to obtain money, and maps.

Keep in mind that your St. Olaf hosts will not know the cities like the back of their hand! They are present to help influence the group experience, not to be an expert on tourism in each location. Thus, we recommend bringing a guidebook to help you make decisions about your free time.

What you probably don't need from a guide book is a comprehensive list of hotels (since that is handled for you on this program) and lots of details on how to traverse the country by train and the like.

My favorite guide books, then, are the ones that focus on what is special about a place and provide opening hours, admission fees, and lots of pictures. They can all be found at a large book store, at the online equivalents (amazon.com, bn.com, etc.), or even direct from the publisher at their web site. My three favorites are:

Eyewitness Travel Guides by DK (Dorling Kindersley) – often with full country guides as well as pocket guides for individual cities

Fodor's – they claim their Gold Guides are for “all travelers, particularly those who seek a good mix of the cultural and practical”

Insight Guides by Discovery Channel – one of the coolest channels on TV upholds its reputation with these guide books

~ Heidi Quiram, Study Travel Director

General

The Happy Traveler: Unpacking the Secrets of Better Vacations, by Jaime Kurtz

A psychology professor applies research on happiness and decision-making to enhance the experience of travel.

Travel as a Political Act, by Rick Steves

I've been sharing this same idea with travelers for years, captured here in the summary on amazon.com: “By sharing his experiences from Europe, Central America, Asia, and the Middle East, Rick shows how we can learn more about own country by viewing it from afar.”

The following list was prepared by your program leaders, who say, “Here are some online resources to further whet your appetite, both literally and metaphorically, for Georgia.”

<https://theculturetrip.com/asia/georgia/>

This website provides links to many topics, and to a great deal of information that you don’t need – at least for this trip. But if you’re in a browsing mood, there is plenty to browse here. For example, a synopsis of the various regions of Georgia can be found here:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/georgia/articles/a-regional-guide-to-georgia/>

<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/georgia-per-gahrton/>

This is not just a list, but a list with brief reviews. Fiction is easy to overlook as a travel resource, but as an entry point into other cultures it can be very helpful. The one work of fiction on this list, *Ali and Nino*, by Kurban Said, might seem the least valuable to travelers, but if you enjoy fiction at all, don’t overlook it. It is a perfectly lovely story, told in a loving fashion. As the online review says, it isn’t overtly about Georgia, but the story opens doors of understanding to Georgia and its neighbor nations.

Also, if you are especially interested in either wine or food, you would probably enjoy a short romp through Georgia’s historic wine culture, told by Alice Feiring, author of several books and numerous articles for *Time*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and other publications. The book is called, *For the Love of Wine: My Odyssey Through the World’s Most Ancient Wine Culture*. It’s more about Georgian wine making than about Georgia itself. But wine, like dance, is a deeply rooted culture in Georgia. And speaking of wine ...

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/11/oldest-winemaking-grapes-georgia-archaeology/>

National Geographic article about the oldest known winemaking in the world. And it’s in Georgia. When you consider how important wine has become in Jewish and Christian religion (not to mention the economy of California) we might owe a lot to ancient Georgia.

And since I mentioned dance: Just a few months ago a Georgian/Swedish filmmaker released a movie about a gay dancer in the Georgian National Dance program. *And Then We Danced*. Georgia’s traditions about what is and is not appropriate masculinity in dance, and the Georgian Orthodox Church’s views of human sexuality obviously create deep conflict for the main character and the community around him. The movie is in Georgian, not in English; it is sub-titled. It has been playing at the Lagoon Theater in Minneapolis, and is likely showing elsewhere in the US too. Its three-day run in Tbilisi was vigorously protested by the church and others. If you attend only academy award movies, this one is not for you. But the clash of past and present, tradition and openness, old-world and new, is set here in Tbilisi, Georgia.

https://www.persee.fr/doc/efr_0000-0000_1983_act_67_1_2455#efr_0000-0000_1983_act_67_1_T1_0123_0000

This article was *not* written for tourists. This is not the place to start reading. But if you have more than a passing interest in Georgia’s place in the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome, this is a brief scholarly paper on the subject.

And this is a NYTimes article from a year ago. We will not see the activity described here, but after looking at the photos and reading the story of this very unusual event, you can decide for yourself what to make of it.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/07/sports/georgia-ball-lelo-burti.html?action=click&module=Editors%20Picks&pgtype=Homepage>