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Slow Food®
Travel

GREATER CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS
REGION – AZERBAIJAN

SLOW FOOD TRAVEL ITINERARIES IN AZERBAIJAN

Proposed itineraries across the Greater Caucasus Mountains Region

SLOW FOOD TRAVEL ITINERARIES IN AZERBAIJAN



We have prepared a series of 3 itineraries, different in length, to inspire all of you travellers and food lovers to discover the hidden gastronomic treasure of the Greater Caucasus Mountains Region of Azerbaijan. All times are indicative to give an idea about the travel distances and the duration of the various activities. All hotels, accommodation structures and restaurants shall be contacted prior to the visit for checking opening hours and availability – English and Russian are mainly spoken by these hosting structures.

The agricultural producers speak Azerbaijani only and are typically very busy with their farming activities. Booking of experiences shall be done in a sensitive way, respecting their time management and way of working. Certain activities are available only during certain months. When the bees are sleeping in the winter the men rather prepare the honey making equipment and women are weaving carpets.

Every kind of activity on a farm has its own period of the year, this should always be considered by the individual tourist and the organising tour operator. Most of the farmers are selling their products (wine, hazelnuts and other dried nuts or fruit, rosehip syrup, honey and other products from honey, etc.) to the visitors after the workshop.

ITINERARY 1




Wine, honey and herbs of North-Western Azerbaijan

Duration
2 NIGHTS AND 3 DAYS



This short Slow Food Travel Tour of Azerbaijan brings you to two of the five Slow Food districts covered by the Slow Food Travel destination of Azerbaijan. Shamakhi and Ismayilli are important wine making areas of Azerbaijan and this tour will bring you to the Meysari and Chabiant wineries. Family farming businesses of honey and rosehip syrup will be visited, the workshop activities are accompanied by activities about samovar tea making, Saj cooking and pastry making. Moreover, one of the country's most important attractions, the mountain town of Lahij with its UNESCO inscribed intangible cultural heritage of copper craftsmanship is in the programme.

DAY 1




-  8:00–10:00
-  Baku–Shamakhi
-  Transfer from Baku to Meysari Winery

The transfer from Baku to Shamakhi usually takes less than 2 hours. Shamakhi is a town located 135 km west from Baku on the southeastern foothills of the Greater Caucasus. At present the Shamakhi district is the center of the ancient Shirvan, the former state of Shirvanshahs, a historical area of Azerbaijan. Along the high-way you will see herds of sheep and cattle on arid hills. A desert landscape of stones is mixed with freshly planted trees that are protecting the environment from landslides. The long curves on the modern high-way are accompanied by shepherds on donkeys on the horizon. When arriving in the larger Shamakhi area the fields are getting greener with trees, oleander and vineyards.


-  10:00–11:00
-  Meysari
-  Breakfast

The breakfast takes place at Abgora restaurant. **Abgora is a soft vinegar that is used in Azerbaijani kitchen and is listed on the Ark of Taste.** The Abgora restaurant is set up in a delicate design, situated in the vineyard and winemaking complex of “Shirvan wines” LLC.

DAY 1




-  11:00–11:30
-  Meysari
-  Meysari wine tasting

The Meysari Winery was inaugurated at the Pavillion of Azerbaijan at EXPO Milan 2015 and has been producing excellent bio-wines since then. The vineyards are located at 750m above sealevel where red and white grapes are growing. The tasting is accompanied by a professional sommelier explaining the history, production process and nuances of the various wines.




-  11:30–13:00
-  Meysari
-  Meysari wine tour

The tour of the Meysari winery includes the visit of the so-called „cantina“, the wine cellar, the production site with its large tanks, the little lake and a walk through the vineyards.

Meysari shop: At the end of the visit at Meysari Winery the visitors can buy wine and books at the souvenir shop. In August and September visitors can also participate at wine harvest and wine making activities.

-  13:30–13:00
-  Meysari – Lahij
-  Transfer

The road is accompanied by a river, canyons and cliffs through the mountains. The valley road to Lahij was an important element of the ancient Silk Road in this region.

-  15:00–16:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Greeting, tea and snack, check-in



Rustam, the owner of the Lahij Guest House will welcome you with fresh fruits and juices from his nearby orchards. All rooms are individually furnished with paintings, hand-made carpets and wooden furniture from local artisans. The house is constructed in the local typical architecture style with flexible anti-seismic belts from wood as the area is known for its regular soft earthquakes.

-  16:00–18:00
-  Lahij
-  Tour around Lahij old town

Tourist attraction: Lahij is under protection of the Reserve Management Center and is one of the most iconic old towns of Azerbaijan. The copper craftsmanship is listed as intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO. There are several copper artisan workshops, souvenir shops with locally hand-made handicraft products and shops with farmers selling jams, pickled fruits and vegetables. The coppersmiths workshops open their doors for visitors to experience the working process.

-  18:00–19:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Tour with Rustam

Rustam proudly shows his garden and explains in detail the variety of herbs, tomatoes and fruits. On his farm he produces rosehip syrup and jams, he is a member of the Wild Caucasian Rosehip Slow Food Presidium. For the restaurant he sources all ingredients from local farmers.

-  19:00 – 21:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Dinner and overnight stay



DAY 2

- 🕒 7:30 – 8:00
- 📍 Lahij Guest House
- 🚶 Breakfast

- 🕒 8:00 – 9:30
- 📍 Lahij Guest House
- 🚶 Transfer


- 🕒 9:30 – 10:00
- 📍 Ivanovka, Andrey
- 🚶 Greeting, tea and snack

Ivanovka, established in 1840, is a small village with around 3.000 russian inhabitants on a sea level of 850m. It is an ex-kolchose town and hence a relict from the Soviet era. Almost all of the families are farmers, collectively working on the fields throughout the year. Andrey Antifeev is one of the bee keepers and grain farmers, with his family he is enthusiastically producing honey and other natural medical products from honey. Andrey is member of the Caucasian Mountain Houney Slow Food Presidium as he is keeping the Great Caucasian bee.


DAY 2

 10:00 – 12:00

 Ivanovka, Andrey

 **Honey making and bee keeping workshop with Andrey**

Andrey loves bees and he loves working with them. Together with his family he makes the equipment for the bee trailers and regularly places them at different fields where the bees can collect the pollen. Depending on the season he will bring the visitors to the fields and show the different steps of honey making. At his house he explains how to make natural medical products from propolis. Andrey and his family are very busy with their agricultural activities and only have limited time for showing their knowledge with workshops – it is important to book the visit a week in advance so Andrey can manage his time.

 12:00 – 14:00

 Ivanovka – Ohio Inn

 **Lunch**

The Ohio Inn is a small bed & breakfast managed by Hasan and his wife. Hasan is originally from Ohio, US and opened the Ohio Inn just a few years ago. **He produces wine from the Madrasa Grape Slow Food Presidium** and sources all ingredients of his restaurant from farmers in Ivanovka.

 14:00 – 15:00

 Ivanovka


 **Molokan house**

On demand, Hasan will show the Molokan Cultural house which is next to the Ohio Inn. Molokans are a Russian folk group with their own religion and traditions.

 15:00 – 15:30

 Ivanovka – Chabiant

 **Transfer**

 15:30 – 17:00

 Chabiant

 **Check-in and snack**

Check-in at Chateau Monolit, the accommodation of the Chabiant Winery. The entrance in form of a wine barrel already anticipates what can be expected behind the doors – a wonderful wine production facility with a hotel, restaurant and pool.

 17:00 – 19:00

 Chabiant

 **Wine tour and wine tasting**

The wine tasting takes place in the restaurant area next to the pool, chilled white and rosé wine as well as red wine can be tasted, accompanied by the words of Italian enologists. The wine cellar, constructed in the early 2000s, is a cool and fresh place where the story of Chabiant is told. **Chabiant also produces the Madrasa grape which is recognized as a Slow Food Presidium from this area.**

 19:00 – 21:00

 Chabiant

 **Dinner and overnight stay**

The restaurant offers typical dishes of the Gorno Shirvan region, all the ingredients are sourced from local farmers. Meat, honey and cheese usually come from Ivanovka.



DAY 3

🕒 7:30 – 8:00

📍 Chabiant

🚶 Breakfast

🕒 8:00 – 9:00

📍 Chabiant – Tezekend

🚶 Transfer

🕒 9:00 – 10:00

📍 Tezekend, lakeside Garden

🚶 Breakfast

Greeting, tea, snack and introduction into the Lakeside Garden philosophy by Gunel.

🕒 10:00 – 12:00

📍 Tezekend, lakeside Garden

🚶 Workshop

Workshop activities:

- Tea making with Samovar;
- Qutab making and cooking;
- Preparation of Ayran, a classical yoghurt drink with fresh herbs;
- cooking of Saj on open fire;
- walk through the garden and explanation of herbs;
- rosehip syrup making (Lakeside Garden is member of the Wild Caucasian Rosehip Slow Food Presidium).

Depending on the season Lakeside Garden offers various activities, the cooking and preparation of food is carried out by the parents of Gunel.

🕒 12:00 – 14:00

📍 Tezekend, lakeside Garden

🚶 Lunch

Lunch with the food that was prepared with the help of the visitors.

🕒 14:00 – 17:00

📍 Tezekend – Baku

🚶 Transfer

ITINERARY 2

From Baku to Sheki: about wine making and bee-keeping along the Silk Road of North-Western Azerbaijan




Duration

3 NIGHTS AND 4 DAYS



The medium Slow Food Travel Tour of Azerbaijan brings you to four of the five districts covered by the Slow Food Travel destination in Azerbaijan. Day one and two are focused on the wine making in Azerbaijan. During the other days the farming of the presidia products of honey, rosehip and hazelnut can be experienced. The workshop activities are accompanied by activities about samovar tea making, Saj cooking and pastry making. Moreover, one of the country's most important attractions such as the mountain town of Lahij (copper craftsmanship is an intangible cultural heritage listed by UNESCO), the Sheki Khan palace (UNESCO world heritage since 2019) and the ethnic minority of the Udi community in Nij village will be visited.

DAY 1




-  8:00–10:00
-  Baku–Shamakhi
-  Transfer from Baku to Meysari Winery

The transfer from Baku to Shamakhi usually takes less than 2 hours. Shamakhi is a town located 135 km west from Baku on the southeastern foothills of the Greater Caucasus. At present the Shamakhi district is the center of the ancient Shirvan, the former state of Shirvanshahs, a historical area of Azerbaijan. Along the high-way you will see herds of sheep and cattle on arid hills. A desert landscape of stones is mixed with freshly planted trees that are protecting the environment from landslides. The long curves on the modern high-way are accompanied by shepherds on donkeys on the horizon. When arriving in the larger Shamakhi area the fields are getting greener with trees, oleander and vineyards.




-  10:00–11:00
-  Meysari
-  Breakfast

The breakfast takes place at Abgora restaurant. **Abgora is a soft vinegar that is used in Azerbaijani kitchen and is listed on the Ark of Taste.** The Abgora restaurant is set up in a delicate design, situated in the vineyard and winemaking complex of “Shirvan wines” LLC.

DAY 1



-  11:00–11:30
-  Meysari
-  Meysari wine tasting




The Meysari Winery was inaugurated at the Pavillion of Azerbaijan at EXPO Milan 2015 and has been producing excellent bio-wines since then. The vineyards are located at 750m above sealevel where red and white grapes are growing. The tasting is accompanied by a professional sommelier explaining the history, production process and nuances of the various wines.

-  11:30–13:00
-  Meysari
-  Meysari wine tour

The tour of the Meysari winery includes the visit of the so-called „cantina“, the wine cellar, the production site with its large tanks, the little lake and a walk through the vineyards.

Meysari shop: At the end of the visit at Meysari Winery the visitors can buy wine and books at the souvenir shop. In August and September visitors can also participate at wine harvest and wine making activities.

-  13:30–15:00
-  Meysari – Lahij
-  Transfer

-  15:00–16:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Greeting, tea and snack, check-in




Rustam, the owner of the Lahij Guest House will welcome you with fresh fruits and juices from his nearby orchards. All rooms are individually furnished with paintings, hand-made carpets and wooden furniture from local artisans. The house is constructed in the local typical architecture style with flexible anti-seismic belts from wood as the area is known for its regular soft earthquakes.

-  16:00–18:00
-  Lahij
-  Tour around Lahij old town

Tourist attraction: Lahij is under protection of the Reserve Management Center and is one of the most iconic old towns of Azerbaijan. The copper craftsmanship is listed as intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO. There are several copper artisan workshops, souvenir shops with locally hand-made handicraft products and shops with farmers selling jams, pickled fruits and vegetables. The coppersmiths workshops open their doors for visitors to experience the working process.

-  18:00–19:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Tour with Rustam

Rustam proudly shows his garden and explains in detail the variety of herbs, tomatoes and fruits. On his farm he produces rosehip syrup and jams, he is a member of the Wild Caucasian Rosehip Slow Food Presidium. For the restaurant he sources all ingredients from local farmers.

-  19:00 – 21:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Dinner and overnight stay



DAY 2

- 🕒 7:30 – 8:00
- 📍 Lahij Guest House
- 🚶 Breakfast

- 🕒 8:00 – 9:30
- 📍 Lahij Guest House
- 🚶 Transfer

- 🕒 9:30 – 10:00
- 📍 Ivanovka, Andrey
- 🚶 Greeting, tea and snack

Ivanovka, established in 1840, is a small village with around 3.000 russian inhabitants on a sea level of 850m. It is an ex-kolchose town and hence a relict from the Soviet era. Almost all of the families are farmers, collectively working on the fields throughout the year. Andrey Antifeev is one of the bee keepers and grain farmers, with his family he is enthusiastically producing honey and other natural medical products from honey. Andrey is member of the Caucasian Mountain Houney Slow Food Presidium as he is keeping the Great Caucasian bee.

DAY 2

 10:00 – 12:00

 Ivanovka, Andrey

 **Honey making and bee keeping workshop with Andrey**

Andrey loves bees and he loves working with them. Together with his family he makes the equipment for the bee trailers and regularly places them at different fields where the bees can collect the pollen. Depending on the season he will bring the visitors to the fields and show the different steps of honey making. At his house he explains how to make natural medical products from propolis. Andrey and his family are very busy with their agricultural activities and only have limited time for showing their knowledge with workshops – it is important to book the visit a week in advance so Andrey can manage his time.

 12:00 – 14:00

 Ivanovka – Ohio Inn

 **Lunch**

The Ohio Inn is a small bed & breakfast managed by Hasan and his wife. Hasan is originally from Ohio, US and opened the Ohio Inn just a few years ago. **He produces wine from the Madrasa Grape Slow Food Presidium** and sources all ingredients of his restaurant from farmers in Ivanovka.


 14:00 – 15:00

 Ivanovka


 **Molokan house**

On demand, Hasan will show the Molokan Cultural house which is next to the Ohio Inn. Molokans are a Russian folk group with their own religion and traditions.

 15:00 – 15:30

 Ivanovka – Chabiant

 **Transfer**

 15:30 – 17:00

 Chabiant

 **Check-in and snack**


Check-in at Chateau Monolit, the accommodation of the Chabiant Winery. The entrance in form of a wine barrel already anticipates what can be expected behind the doors – a wonderful wine production facility with a hotel, restaurant and pool.

 17:00 – 19:00

 Chabiant

 **Wine tour and wine tasting**

The wine tasting takes place in the restaurant area next to the pool, chilled white and rosé wine as well as red wine can be tasted, accompanied by the words of Italian enologists. The wine cellar, constructed in the early 2000s, is a cool and fresh place where the story of Chabiant is told. **Chabiant also produces the Madrasa grape which is recognized as a Slow Food Presidium from this area.**

 19:00 – 21:00

 Chabiant

 **Dinner and overnight stay**

The restaurant offers typical dishes of the Gorno Shirvan region, all the ingredients are sourced from local farmers. Meat, honey and cheese usually come from Ivanovka.



DAY 3

🕒 7:30 – 8:00

📍 Chabiant

🚶 Breakfast

🕒 8:00 – 9:00

📍 Chabiant – Sumaghalli village

🚶 Transfer

🕒 9:00 – 10:00

📍 Chab Sumaghalli village – Arzu Women Group

🚶 Greetings

Greeting, tea, snack and introduction into the Arzu Women Group by Arzu Mirzayeva.

🕒 10:00 – 12:00

📍 Chab Sumaghalli village – Arzu Women Group

🚶 Workshop

Workshop activities may include:

- carpet weaving (in the winter months: October - March);
- distillation of garden fruits with a hand-made distiller (cornelian cherry, plum, mulberry, pear, etc.);
- making of fruit jams with the **Ark of Taste product Rjal apple**;
- making of pastries and sweets typical for the region with hazelnuts, walnuts and honey;
- **Caucasian Mountain honey (Slow Food Presidium)** and propolis making workshops in the summer months (flower honey and lime-tree blossom honey);
- Dolma making with peanut leaves;


Depending on the season Arzu women group offers various activities.

DAY 3

 12:00 – 12:30

 Chab Sumaghalli village – Vandam

 Transfer

 12:30 – 14:00

 Vandam

 Lunch

Vandam Restaurant is situated in Gabala and offers a beautiful view over the valley. The ingredients are sourced locally and at the reception honey is sold from Slow Food presidia producers.


 14:00 – 15:00

 Vandam – Nij

 Transfer

 15:00 – 16:00

 Nij

 Udi Village – museum and church

The Azerbaijan Udi Hearth Historical Ethnographic Park and Museum is located at the village of Nij. The museum is situated in an original house from the 19th century where once the local priest used to live. Most of the furniture is original, the rooms are outfitted with Udi family photos and working equipment for sowing, carpet weaving and hair dressing. Also the church can be visited where mess services take place weekly.

 16:00 – 18:00

 Nij

 Workshop

Most of the people of the Udi ethnic minority community are farmers, their best sold products are pickles, pork, vodka and wine. Visitors can participate at various activities that are related to agriculture and cooking of Qutab, Saj, sweets and pastries. The Udi restaurant is one of the few places in Azerbaijan where the visitors can try Saj and Dolma with pork as the Udi are not muslims.

 19:00 – 21:00

 Nij

 Dinner

Almost all ingredients at the Udi Restaurant are sourced from farmers around the Nij village, including pork, vodka and wine.


 19:00 – 21:00

 Nij


 Overnight

The Udi village offers 16 cottages with individually furnished rooms made from local artisans.

DAY 4

 7:30 – 8:00


 Nij

 Breakfast

 8:00 – 9:30

 Nij – Sheki Bio-Garden

 Transfer

 9:30 – 10:00

 Sheki Bio-Garden

 Breakfast


Greeting, tea, snack with fresh trandir bread and home-made honey; introduction into the Bio-Garden by Etibar and his daughters.

 10:00 – 11:00

 Sheki Bio-Garden

 Fruit picking


Due to the excellent soil conditions with fresh water from the mountains and the mild climate, the Bio-Garden uses only organic fertilizers which come from the animal breeding of poultry, goose, duck, rabbits, and other small animals. The visitors can pick fruits from the orchards and pay per kilo.

 11:00 – 12:00

 Sheki Bio-Garden

 Tour

The tour through the Bio-Garden can be organized according to the interests of the visitors. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, river-trout or domestic animals, Etibar and his daughters can explain in detail about the cultivation and production at the Bio-Garden.


 12:00 – 14:00

 Sheki Bio-Garden

 Lunch


Almost all ingredients at the Bio-Garden restaurant are sourced from their own fields and orchards, if the visitors would like to eat fish they can even choose one of the living river-trout in the breeding river.


 14:00 – 14:30

 Bio-Garden – Sheki city centre

 Transfer

 14:30 – 16:00

 Sheki city centre

 Visit of Sheki old town

The Sheki Khan palace was listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2019 and is considered as the region's historical and architectural jewel. The walk through the Sheki old town also leads through the Karavanseray, to a Sheki Halva pastry shop and to souvenir shops which are located along the ancient silk road.

 16:00 – 21:00

 Sheki – Baku

 Transfer

ITINERARY 3




Full Tour of the Slow Food Travel Destination

Duration
4 NIGHTS AND 5 DAYS



The full Slow Food Travel Tour of Azerbaijan brings you to all the five districts covered by the Slow Food Travel destination in Azerbaijan, from Shamakhi up to Gakh. Day one and two are focused on the wine making in Azerbaijan. During the other days the farming of the presidia products of honey, rosehip and hazelnut can be experienced. The workshop activities are accompanied by activities about samovar tea making, Saj cooking and pastry making. Moreover, one of the country's most important attractions such as the mountain town Lahij, the Sheki Khan palace, the Christian Alban church in Kish and the ethnic minority of the Udi community in Nij village will be visited.

DAY 1




-  8:00–10:00
-  Baku–Shamakhi
-  Transfer from Baku to Meysari Winery

The transfer from Baku to Shamakhi usually takes less than 2 hours. Shamakhi is a town located 135 km west from Baku on the southeastern foothills of the Greater Caucasus. At present the Shamakhi district is the center of the ancient Shirvan, the former state of Shirvanshahs, a historical area of Azerbaijan. Along the high-way you will see herds of sheep and cattle on arid hills. A desert landscape of stones is mixed with freshly planted trees that are protecting the environment from landslides. The long curves on the modern high-way are accompanied by shepherds on donkeys on the horizon. When arriving in the larger Shamakhi area the fields are getting greener with trees, oleander and vineyards.


-  10:00–11:00
-  Meysari
-  Breakfast

The breakfast takes place at Abgora restaurant. **Abgora is a soft vinegar that is used in Azerbaijani kitchen and is listed on the Ark of Taste.** The Abgora restaurant is set up in a delicate design, situated in the vineyard and winemaking complex of “Shirvan wines” LLC.

DAY 1




-  11:00–11:30
-  Meysari
-  Meysari wine tasting




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-  11:30–13:00
-  Meysari
-  Meysari wine tour

The tour of the Meysari winery includes the visit of the so-called „cantina“, the wine cellar, the production site with its large tanks, the little lake and a walk through the vineyards.

Meysari shop: At the end of the visit at Meysari Winery the visitors can buy wine and books at the souvenir shop. In August and September visitors can also participate at wine harvest and wine making activities.

-  13:30–15:00
-  Meysari – Lahij
-  Transfer

-  15:00–16:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Greeting, tea and snack, check-in




Rustam, the owner of the Lahij Guest House will welcome you with fresh fruits and juices from his nearby orchards. All rooms are individually furnished with paintings, hand-made carpets and wooden furniture from local artisans. The house is constructed in the local typical architecture style with flexible anti-seismic belts from wood as the area is known for its regular soft earthquakes.

-  16:00–18:00
-  Lahij
-  Tour around Lahij old town

Tourist attraction: Lahij is under protection of the Reserve Management Center and is one of the most iconic old towns of Azerbaijan. The copper craftsmanship is listed as intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO. There are several copper artisan workshops, souvenir shops with locally hand-made handicraft products and shops with farmers selling jams, pickled fruits and vegetables. The coppersmiths workshops open their doors for visitors to experience the working process.

-  18:00–19:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Tour with Rustam

Rustam proudly shows his garden and explains in detail the variety of herbs, tomatoes and fruits. On his farm he produces rosehip syrup and jams, he is a member of the Wild Caucasian Rosehip Slow Food Presidium. For the restaurant he sources all ingredients from local farmers.

-  19:00 – 21:00
-  Lahij Guest House
-  Dinner and overnight stay



DAY 2

- 🕒 7:30 – 8:00
- 📍 Lahij Guest House
- 🚶 Breakfast

- 🕒 8:00 – 9:30
- 📍 Lahij Guest House
- 🚶 Transfer


- 🕒 9:30 – 10:00
- 📍 Ivanovka, Andrey
- 🚶 Greeting, tea and snack

Ivanovka, established in 1840, is a small village with around 3.000 russian inhabitants on a sea level of 850m. It is an ex-kolchose town and hence a relict from the Soviet era. Almost all of the families are farmers, collectively working on the fields throughout the year. Andrey Antifeev is one of the bee keepers and grain farmers, with his family he is enthusiastically producing honey and other natural medical products from honey. Andrey is member of the Caucasian Mountain Houney Slow Food Presidium as he is keeping the Great Caucasian bee.

DAY 2

 10:00 – 12:00

 Ivanovka, Andrey

 **Honey making and bee keeping workshop with Andrey**

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 Ivanovka – Ohio Inn

 **Lunch**

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 Ivanovka


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On demand, Hasan will show the Molokan Cultural house which is next to the Ohio Inn. Molokans are a Russian folk group with their own religion and traditions.


 15:00 – 15:30

 Ivanovka – Chabiant

 **Transfer**

 15:30 – 17:00

 Chabiant

 **Check-in and snack**

Check-in at Chateau Monolit, the accommodation of the Chabiant Winery. The entrance in form of a wine barrel already anticipates what can be expected behind the doors – a wonderful wine production facility with a hotel, restaurant and pool.

 17:00 – 19:00

 Chabiant

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The wine tasting takes place in the restaurant area next to the pool, chilled white and rosé wine as well as red wine can be tasted, accompanied by the words of Italian enologists. The wine cellar, constructed in the early 2000s, is a cool and fresh place where the story of Chabiant is told. **Chabiant also produces the Madrasa grape which is recognized as a Slow Food Presidium from this area.**

 19:00 – 21:00

 Chabiant

 **Dinner and overnight stay**

The restaurant offers typical dishes of the Gorno Shirvan region, all the ingredients are sourced from local farmers. Meat, honey and cheese usually come from Ivanovka.



DAY 3

🕒 7:30 – 8:00

📍 Chabiant

🚶 Breakfast

🕒 8:00 – 9:00

📍 Chabiant – Sumaghalli village

🚶 Transfer

🕒 9:00 – 10:00

📍 Chab Sumaghalli village – Arzu Women Group

🚶 Greetings

Greeting, tea, snack and introduction into the Arzu Women Group by Arzu Mirzayeva.

🕒 10:00 – 12:00

📍 Chab Sumaghalli village – Arzu Women Group

🚶 Workshop

Workshop activities may include:

- carpet weaving (in the winter months: October - March);
- distillation of garden fruits with a hand-made distiller (cornelian cherry, plum, mulberry, pear, etc.);
- making of fruit jams with the **Ark of Taste product Rjal apple**;
- making of pastries and sweets typical for the region with hazelnuts, walnuts and honey;
- **Caucasian Mountain honey (Slow Food Presidium)** and propolis making workshops in the summer months (flower honey and lime-tree blossom honey);
- Dolma making with peanut leaves;

Depending on the season Arzu women group offers various activities.




DAY 3

-  12:00 – 12:30
-  Chab Sumaghalli village – Vandam
-  Transfer

-  12:30 – 14:00
-  Vandam
-  Lunch

Vandam Restaurant is situated in Gabala and offers a beautiful view over the valley. The ingredients are sourced locally and at the reception honey is sold from Slow Food presidia producers.

-  14:00 – 15:00
-  Vandam – Nij
-  Transfer

-  15:00 – 16:00
-  Nij
-  Udi Village – museum and church

The Azerbaijan Udi Hearth Historical Ethnographic Park and Museum is located at the village of Nij. The museum is situated in an original house from the 19th century where once the local priest used to live. Most of the furniture is original, the rooms are outfitted with Udi family photos and working equipment for sowing, carpet weaving and hair dressing. Also the church can be visited where mess services take place weekly.

-  16:00 – 18:00
-  Nij
-  Workshop

Most of the people of the Udi ethnic minority community are farmers, their best sold products are pickles, pork, vodka and wine. Visitors can participate at various activities that are related to agriculture and cooking of Qutab, Saj, sweets and pastries. The Udi restaurant is one of the few places in Azerbaijan where the visitors can try Saj and Dolma with pork as the Udi are not muslims.

-  19:00 – 21:00
-  Nij
-  Dinner

Almost all ingredients at the Udi Restaurant are sourced from farmers around the Nij village, including pork, vodka and wine.

-  19:00 – 21:00
-  Nij
-  Overnight

The Udi village offers 16 cottages with individually furnished rooms made from local artisans.



DAY 4

🕒 7:30 – 8:00

📍 Nij

🚶 Breakfast

🕒 8:00 – 9:30

📍 Nij – Sheki Bio-Garden

🚶 Transfer

🕒 9:30 – 10:00

📍 Sheki Bio-Garden

🚶 Breakfast

Greeting, tea, snack with fresh trandir bread and home-made honey; introduction into the Bio-Garden by Etibar and his daughters.

🕒 10:00 – 11:00

📍 Sheki Bio-Garden

🚶 Fruit picking

Due to the excellent soil conditions with fresh water from the mountains and the mild climate, the Bio-Garden uses only organic fertilizers which come from the animal breeding of poultry, goose, duck, rabbits, and other small animals. The visitors can pick fruits from the orchards and pay per kilo.

DAY 4

 11:00 – 12:00

 Sheki Bio-Garden

 Tour

The tour through the Bio-Garden can be organized according to the interests of the visitors. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, river-trout or domestic animals, Etibar and his daughters can explain in detail about the cultivation and production at the Bio-Garden.


 12:00 – 14:00

 Sheki Bio-Garden


 Lunch

Almost all ingredients at the Bio-Garden restaurant are sourced from their own fields and orchards, if the visitors would like to eat fish they can even choose one of the living river-trout in the breeding river.


ALTERNATIVE TO BIO-GARDEN – Sheki Halva making workshop


 7:30 – 8:00


 Nij

 Breakfast


 8:00 – 9:30

 Nij – Sheki

 Transfer

 9:30 – 10:00

 Yahya Halva – Café

 Breakfast

Yahya Café serves excellent Italian roasted Illy Caffè and is the best way to dive into the following Sheki Halva making workshop. Sheki Halva is a local sweet made with hazelnuts, honey and rice flour.

 10:00 – 11:00

 Yahya Halva

 Sheki Halva making workshop

Sheki Halva is a typical sweet from Sheki based on old recipes. Yahya Halva is a pastry shop which opened in 1842 and is now managed by Ramin Semedov. He named this shop after his grandfather Yahya who risked his life for keeping the Halva production running under the early Soviet era of the 20th century.

The workshop may include the following activities:

- preparation of rice dough;
- frying rice flour;
- making sugar syrup or preparing the honey;
- crushing hazelnuts;
- decoration;
- Sheki Halva tasting;

 11:00 – 11:30

 Yahya Halva – Rice mill

 Transfer

DAY 4


 11:30 – 12:00

 Sheki

 Visit of the rice mill

Ismayilov Gurbanali is the manager of a rice and wheat mill from 1898. The mill works with a stone that is powered by a creek running through Sheki. The mill produces the finest rice flour which is used for Sheki Halva.

ALTERNATIVE TO RICE MILL – Visit of Kish Alban church

 11:30 – 12:00

 Kish

 Visit of Kish

The Christian Alban church in Kish, the fundament is dated back to the third century, is under protection of the Reserve Management Center of Azerbaijan and is considered a national heritage.

 12:00 – 12:30

 Sheki

 Transfer

 12:30 – 14:00

 Sheki Karavanseray

 Lunch

The upper Karavanseray of Sheki is one of the first hotels of the world. This is a place where camel karavans that travelled along the ancient silk road used to make a stop for rest and overnight. Today, the old Karavanseray is still a hotel and restaurant. The kitchen is simple and the ingredients for the dishes are sourced locally.

 14:00 – 18:00

 Sheki

 Visit of Sheki old town

The Sheki Khan palace was listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2019 and is considered as the region's historical and architectural jewel. The walk through the Sheki old town also leads through the Karavanseray, to a Sheki Halva pastry shop and to souvenir shops which are located along the ancient silk road.

 14:00 – 18:00

 Sheki – Gakh

 Transfer


 14:00 – 18:00

 Gakh restaurant

 Check-in, dinner and overnight stay


Check-in at Gakh Restaurant and Resort and dinner.


DAY 5

 7:30 – 8:00


 Gakh restaurant

 Breakfast

 8:00 – 8:30

 Gakh – Lekit village


 Transfer

 8:30 – 9:00


 Lekit village – Api Delta

 Breakfast

Greeting, tea, nuts and honey.

 9:00 – 11:00

 Api Delta


 Bee keeping and honey making

Badraddin and Vusal Hesretov, father and son, are managing the bee keeping and honey farm called Api Delta. They are keeping the Great Caucasian bee and are member of the Caucasian Mountain Honey Slow Food Presidium. Vusal recently finished his studies about bee-keeping in Turkey and brings in a lot of theoretical background knowledge about modern bee and honey farming. The visitors can experience the bee and honey itinerary in the woods covering ancient and modern bee-keeping techniques. A look into the laboratory and the honey storage house gives an insight into the research and management component of the Api Delta honey business approach. Vusal's aunt, named Bahar, is available for various workshops sharing her knowledge about local dishes and natural medical products such as syrups.

 11:00 – 11:30

 Lekit village – Gakh

 Transfer

 11:30 – 12:30

 Gakh

 Transfer

Dilara Ahmedova is the coach of the local girls' soccer team, a farmer, a community leader and a power lady. Together with her extended family she cultivates more than 15ha of land and orchards with hazelnuts, fruits, berries, herbs etc. In the newly established food processing workshop the visitors can see the steps of washing, drying, packaging and labelling of the many different agricultural products.

 12:30 – 14:00

 Gakh

 Lunch

Dilara also operates a small and new restaurant with 100% locally sourced products. Dilara's driving power is the soccer team: she wants to invest into better sport infrastructure for her girls!

 14:00 – 20:00

 Gakh – Baku

 Transfer



THE COVCHEG PROJECT

Community-based Value Chain Enhancement in the Greater Caucasus Mountains Area (COVCHEG) is an EU-funded project coordinated by Slow Food in partnership with the Azerbaijan Tourism Board.

The project adds value to local gastronomy and cultural heritage, aiming to foster economic regeneration and the well-being of rural communities in Azerbaijan, and promotes a development model that combines agrobiodiversity maintenance, economic development and poverty reduction as mutually supportive objectives that can be achieved by the sound management and productive use of agrobiodiversity resources. The pilot project area includes five districts, part of the Shaki-Zagatala and Daghlig-Shirvan economic regions: Shamakhi, Ismayilli, Gabala, Shaki and Gakh.



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