



## SECOND CIRCULAR

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# International Congress of Speleology In Artificial Cavities

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22-26 September 2026

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Tbilisi, Georgian National  
Museum



# HYPOGEA 2026



MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
OF GEORGIA





# 5th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF SPELEOLOGY IN ARTIFICIAL CAVITIES

## Welcome

We are pleased to present the Second Circular for HYPOGEA 2026 — the International Congress of Speleology in Artificial Cavities, which will take place at the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi from 22 to 26 September 2026.

Building on the success of previous HYPOGEA meetings, this congress aims to bring together an international community of researchers, practitioners, and specialists working on artificial cavities, underground heritage, and related disciplines. The event will provide a dynamic platform for the exchange of new research, methodologies, and interdisciplinary perspectives, fostering collaboration across archaeology, speleology, conservation, geology, and cultural heritage studies. This Second Circular provides updated and detailed information regarding the congress, including registration procedures and deadlines. In addition, it offers practical guidance to assist participants in planning their visit to Tbilisi, such as accommodation options, transportation, and general information about the city.

A highlight of HYPOGEA 2026 will be two field trips, designed to showcase Georgia's rich and diverse underground cultural heritage. These excursions will offer participants a unique opportunity to explore significant artificial cavities and archaeological sites, while engaging directly with local contexts and research traditions. We warmly invite you to join us in Tbilisi for what promises to be an inspiring and productive gathering.



## Destination

# Tbilisi, Georgia

## A city built on rock — ancient, vivid, and alive

Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, along the banks of the Kura River, Tbilisi stands as a city shaped by a long and complex historical trajectory. As the capital and largest urban center of Georgia, it has, since its foundation in the 5th century, served as a political, economic, and cultural focal point in the South Caucasus.

Owing to its strategic geographical position and proximity to major transcontinental routes, including those associated with the historic Silk Road, Tbilisi has, throughout its history, been an arena of interaction and contestation among various regional and imperial powers. In the High Middle Ages, Tbilisi functioned as an important administrative centre of the Caucasus, further reinforcing its regional significance.

The historical development of Tbilisi is distinctly reflected in its architectural landscape, which presents a layered composition of medieval, neoclassical, Beaux-Arts, Art Nouveau, Soviet, and modern elements. This architectural diversity embodies the city's evolving cultural and political contexts, as well as its role as a meeting point of different traditions and influences.



© Badri Vadachkoria

## Georgian National Museum

3 Shota Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi 0105, Georgia

The Georgian National Museum was established in 2004 and is the largest museum association in the country. It comprises 14 museums established during the 20th century, a national gallery, 4 house-museums, and 2 scientific research institutes. The National Museum is the legal successor to the “Caucasus Museum,” founded in Tbilisi in 1852, and continues the country’s long museum traditions. It houses more than one and a half million exhibits reflecting the nature, life, and culture of Georgia, the Caucasus, and the Near East from ancient times to the present day.

The National Museum brings together a vast range of collections: the oldest human remains discovered in Eurasia, unique archaeological and ethnographic artefacts, natural history materials, and the rich heritage of Christian culture — repoussé and painted icons, crosses, embroideries, and cloisonné enamel; outstanding Oriental monuments, an extensive numismatic collection — including the rare gold stater of Colchian King Akes (3rd century BC) and a hoard of copper coins of King Tamar — as well as exquisite gold and silver jewellery from ancient Colchis, and remarkable works by Georgian and European painters from various periods.

The museum’s permanent exhibitions span archaeological materials from the Stone Age through the 18th century, ethnographic displays presenting traditional Georgian dwellings, furniture, clothing, jewellery, and weaponry, as well as materials documenting the history of Georgia in the 19th century.

The museum actively collaborates with educational and cultural institutions at both local and international levels, and stands as one of the country’s most important scientific, educational, and cultural centres.



*Georgian National Museum*



*Georgian National Museum conference room*



*Georgian National Museum exhibition "Biodiversity in the South Caucasus"*



*Georgian National Museum exhibition "Stone Age Georgia"*

# HYPOGEA 2026 — 5th International Congress of Speleology in Artificial Cavities

The HYPOGEA International Congress of Speleology in Artificial Cavities is a global scientific meeting focused on the study and preservation of man-made underground spaces such as caves, tunnels, and rock-cut monuments. It was first established in 2015 in Rome under the patronage of the International Union of Speleology, following earlier international collaborations that highlighted the need for a dedicated platform on artificial cavities. Since then, it has developed into a recurring international event, bringing together archaeologists, speleologists, geologists, architects, and heritage experts to share research, promote modern technologies, and improve conservation practices. The congress has been hosted in culturally significant locations including Cappadocia, Dobrich, and Genoa, with the upcoming 2026 edition taking place in Tbilisi, reflecting the country's rich tradition of rock-cut heritage; today, HYPOGEA is considered one of the leading international platforms for advancing research and protection of underground cultural heritage worldwide.

The 5th International Congress of Speleology in Artificial Cavities — HYPOGEA 2026 — will take place in Tbilisi, Georgia, from 22 to 26 September 2026, under the patronage of the Union Internationale de Spéléologie (UIS). It is organised by the Georgian National Museum and the Ministry of Culture of Georgia, in partnership with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

Georgia was chosen as host due to its extraordinary wealth of rock-cut monuments — ranging from Bronze Age artificial caves to cave sanctuaries of the Classical period and remarkable Christian monastic complexes adorned with wall paintings of outstanding artistic mastery. Georgian scholars have also accumulated nearly 150 years of experience in the scientific investigation of artificial caves in the Caucasus. The Congress will bring together researchers, heritage professionals, and specialists from across the world to share knowledge and best practices in the field of rock-cut heritage — with unique opportunities to visit Georgia's most exceptional sites firsthand.

## Hypogea 2026 Organising Committee

Nodar Bakhtadze, Bachana Gabekhadze (Georgia), Carla Galeazzi (Italy), Ketevan Gongadze (Georgia), Vazha Mamiashvili (Georgia), Mikheil Tsereteli (Georgia), Salome Markozia (Georgia), Sesili Sordia (Georgia), Inga Martkoplshvili (Georgia), Nana Rezesidze (Georgia), Giorgi Gogoladze (Georgia), Giorgi Bagrationi (Georgia) and Mikheil Shalvashvili (Georgia).

## Hypogea 2026 Scientific Committee

Mario Parise (Italy), Roberto Bixio and Carla Galeazzi (Italy), Nodar Bakhtadze, Davit Lordkipanidze, Jimsher Chkhvimiani and Zaza Skhirtladze (Georgia), Tudor Tamas (Romania), Stefano Saj and Isabella Serena Liso (Italy), Ali Yamaç (Turkey), Alexey Zhalov (Bulgaria), Boaz Zissu (Israel).



# Before Registering To HYPOGEA 2026

Letter of invitation: If you need a letter of invitation to the Congress, please contact the Congress Secretary before 1st August 2026 by email [hypogea2026@gmail.com](mailto:hypogea2026@gmail.com).

## Important Deadlines

<b>October 2025</b>	Abstract submissions open
<b>1 March 2026</b>	Abstract submission deadline • <b>CLOSED</b>
<b>30 June 2026</b>	Early Bird registration closes
<b>30 July 2026</b>	Deadline for presenting authors to finalise payment
<b>20 August 2026</b>	Third Circular — final program
<b>22–26 September 2026</b>	<b>HYPOGEA 2026 • Tbilisi, Georgia</b>

## Registration Fees

Category	Regular	Accomp.	Student
Early registration (until 30 June 2026)	€ 85	€ 85	€ 50
Regular registration (from 1 July 2026)	€ 100	€ 85	€ 50
Printed congress proceedings	€ 45	€ 45	€ 45
Congress dinner — 26 September	€ 20	€ 20	€ 20
Field trip — Uplistsikhe (24 Sept)	€ 25	€ 25	€ 25
Field trip — Davit Gareji (26 Sept)	€ 30	€ 30	€ 30

## Payment Information

<b>Beneficiary Name:</b>	Georgian National Museum
<b>Address:</b>	3 Rustaveli ave. 0105, Tbilisi, Georgia
<b>Tax Identification Code:</b>	204468664
<b>Beneficiary bank:</b>	NATIONAL BANK OF GEORGIA, TBILISI
<b>SWIFT CODE:</b>	BNLNGE22
<b>Beneficiary:</b>	Georgian National Museum
<b>IBAN:</b>	GE65NB0331100001150207

## Call for Papers

<b>Submission Deadline</b>	15 May 2026
<b>Max length</b>	6 pages including figures and references
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Guidelines</b>	<a href="https://hypogea2026.com/guidelines">hypogea2026.com/guidelines</a>

**All accepted abstracts are invited to submit a full paper for publication in the peer-reviewed congress proceedings, assessed by the Scientific Committee.**

# Preliminary Programme

*Session assignments confirmed in Third Circular (August 2026).*

## Key note speakers:

- **Dr. David Lordkipanidze**
- **Dr. Mario Parise**
- **Dr. Nodar Bakhtadze**
- **Dr. Carla Galeazzi**

## DAY 1 Monday, 22 September

08:30–10:00 Registration & Welcome Coffee  
10:00–12:00 Opening Ceremony - Georgian National Museum  
12:00–14:00 Session  
14:00–15:00 Lunch  
15:00–16:30 Session  
16:30–17:00 Coffee Break  
17:00–18:00 Session

## DAY 2 Tuesday, 23 September

09:00–10:00 Registration  
10:00–11:00 Session  
11:00–11:30 Coffee Break  
11:30–14:30 Session  
14:30–15:30 Lunch  
15:30–17:00 Session  
17:00–17:30 Coffee Break  
17:30–18:30 Session

## DAY 3 - FIELD TRIP Wednesday, 24 September

09:00 Departure to Uplistsikhe from Georgian National Museum(85 km west of Tbilisi)  
10:30–15:00 Guided visit to Uplistsikhe Rock-Hewn City (Lunch will be provided as a packed meal en route)  
Evening Return to Tbilisi — Free evening

## DAY 4 Thursday, 25 September

09:00–10:00 Registration  
10:00–11:00 Session  
11:00–11:30 Coffee Break  
11:30–14:30 Session  
14:30–15:30 Lunch  
15:30–17:00 Session  
17:00–17:30 Coffee Break  
17:30–18:30 Session

## DAY 5 - FIELD TRIP & Closing Dinner Friday, 26 September

09:00 Departure to David Gareji from Georgian National Museum (70 km south-east)  
11:00–15:00 Guided visit to David Gareji Monastery Complex (Lunch will be provided as a packed meal en route)  
15:00 Return to Tbilisi  
19:00–23:00 Congress Dinner — Georgian Feast

**⚠ Important: For oral presentations and posters texts accompanying images must be in English. We encourage fifteen minutes for the presentation and five minutes for questions.**



## Uplistsikhe

*Rock-Hewn City of the Caucasus — 85 km west of Tbilisi*



©National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia

Carved directly into a sandstone cliff above the Kura River, Uplistsikhe is one of the oldest and most remarkable rock-hewn settlements in the entire Caucasus. Its name translates as “Lord’s Fortress” in Georgian, and for good reason — this ancient cave city served as one of the most important urban and religious centres in early Georgia, dating back to the late Bronze Age, et the end of the 2nd millennium BC.

At its peak, between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD, Uplistsikhe was home to an estimated 20,000 inhabitants, with a sophisticated urban layout that included streets, squares, a water drainage system, and a remarkable variety of rock-cut structures. Wandering through its ruins today, visitors encounter cave halls with elaborately carved ceilings, a pagan temple, a theatre, a pharmacy, a prison, and even a royal hall - all hewn with extraordinary precision from the living rock.

The site reflects the deep interplay between pagan and Christian cultures in Georgian history. After the Christianisation of Georgia in the 4th century, a small three-nave basilica was built directly on top of the former pagan temple, symbolising the spiritual transformation of the city. This church, dating to the 9th-10th centuries, still stands today and remains one of the most striking features of the site.

### Key Information

GPS (Main Site) 41°58'18.0"N / 44°12'05.4"E  
Altitude ~700 – 800 m above sea level  
Distance from Tbilisi ~85 km · approx. 1.5 hrs  
Route Tbilisi → Gori → Uplistsikhe  
Temperature in September ~20–30°C (can feel hotter due to full sun exposure)

### Prerequisites

Participants must be in good health and physically fit for walking on uneven rocky terrain with moderate ascents and descents. The site involves open rock surfaces, carved steps, and exposed sections with limited shade. Sturdy closed shoes are essential.

### Equipment For Individual Use

- Sturdy closed shoes or hiking shoes (mandatory)
- Hat and sunscreen-exposed sections can be very hot in September
- Water bottle (mandatory)

## David Gareji (Lavra)

Rock-Hewn Monastery Complex — 70 km south-east of Tbilisi



©Ketevan Dighmelashvili

Stretching across a stark and otherworldly semi-desert landscape on the border between Georgia and Azerbaijan, David Gareji is one of the most extraordinary monastic complexes in the entire Caucasus.

The complex was founded in the 6th century by David, one of the Thirteen Assyrian Fathers — a group of Syrian Christian monks who played a defining role in the spread and consolidation of Christianity across Georgia. His disciples gradually expanded the site into a thriving monastic community. At its height, the complex comprised over a dozen monasteries spread across the eroded hillsides, housing hundreds of monks and serving as a major centre of Georgian religious thought, manuscript production, and artistic creation.

The most celebrated of the monasteries is Lavra, the founding complex, which contains the cave church and tomb of Davit himself — a site of deep spiritual significance and active pilgrimage to this day. Equally remarkable is the Udabno monastery, whose cave churches are adorned with vivid frescoes dating from the 11th to the 13th centuries. These paintings, depicting scenes from the life of Christ and the saints, are considered among the finest examples of medieval Georgian fresco art, their colors remarkably preserved despite centuries of exposure.

### Key Information

GPS (Main Site – Lavra) 41°26'15.6"N / 45°22'05.4"E

Altitude ~400 – 700 m above sea level

Distance from Tbilisi ~ 70 km approx. 1.5–2 hrs

Route Tbilisi → Sagarejo → Udabno → David Gareja

Temperature in September ~22–32°C (hot, dry, and very exposed)

### Prerequisites

Participants must be in good health and physically fit for walking on uneven rocky terrain with significant ascents and descents. The site involves narrow cave passages, steep internal staircases, and exposed cliff ledges. Sturdy closed shoes are essential.

### Equipment For Individual Use

- Sturdy closed shoes or hiking boots (mandatory)
- Hat and sunscreen—exposed sections can be hot in September
- Water bottle (mandatory)

# What To See In Tbilisi

## Essential Experiences

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### 1 Narikala & Old Town

The 4th-century fortress crowns a labyrinth of cobblestone alleys, wooden-balconied houses and caravansarais. Walk up through the Botanical Garden or take the Rike cable car for a panorama over the rooftops.



### 2 Abanotubani — Sulphur Baths

Beneath the city, warm sulphur springs have flowed since antiquity. The iconic brick domes of Bath Town are one of the Caucasus's most atmospheric districts. A private bath for two costs as little as 100-150 GEL per hour.



### 3 Rustaveli Avenue

The grand boulevard is lined with neoclassical facades: the National Museum, the Rustaveli Theatre, the Opera House and Parliament. By night, when Trinity Cathedral glows on the hill above, it is among the finest urban spectacles in the region.



### 4 Metekhi Church

Perched on a sheer basalt cliff above the Kura River since the 5th century. The equestrian statue of King Vakhtang Gorgasali stands before it -city founder-saint and warlord. The most photographed scene in Georgia.



### 5 Mtatsminda Funicular & Park

The restored funicular climbs to Mtatsminda (Holy Mountain) from the Rustaveli district. The summit park offers a panoramic terrace, the Pantheon of distinguished Georgian writers, public figures and artists, a Ferris wheel and commanding views over the whole city.



©Badri Vadachkoria

## 6 Botanical Garden

Hidden behind Narikala fortress, Tbilisi's Botanical Garden descends a dramatic ravine in the heart of the city. With origins as a royal garden in the 17th century, established as a state botanical garden in 1845, it shelters natural waterfall and over 4,500 species of plant.



©Georgian National Museum

## 7 Open-Air Ethnographic Museum

On the wooded slopes of Turtle Lake, over 70 traditional dwellings from every region of Georgia have been relocated and reconstructed. One of the most evocative ethnographic open-air museums in the Post-Soviet space.



©Georgian National Museum

## 8 The National Gallery

Housed in a grand early 20th-century building on Rustaveli Avenue, the gallery holds the country's finest collection of Georgian painting. Its halls bring together luminous landscapes, bold modernist canvases, and the iconic works of Niko Pirosmani — Georgia's most beloved self-taught painter. One of the cultural anchors of Tbilisi's historic centre.



©Georgian National Museum

## 9 Tbilisi History Museum

Set within the atmospheric Caravanserai of Tbilisi's Old Town, this museum traces the city's layered past from its earliest settlements to the modern era. Artefacts, maps, photographs, and reconstructed interiors bring to life the many civilisations that have passed through this ancient cross-roads city.



## 10 Museum of Fine Arts

Home to one of Georgia's richest collections of decorative and applied art, the Museum of Fine Arts holds outstanding examples of medieval goldsmithery, cloisonné enamel, illuminated manuscripts, and textile work. A testament to the extraordinary craftsmanship that flourished across the centuries in the Caucasus.

## Mtskheta — Ancient Capital of Georgia



**Mtskheta** is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, located about 20 km north of Tbilisi at the confluence of the Kura and Aragvi rivers. It served as the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Iberia for over 700 years and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

Key archaeological sites include:

- **Armaztsikhe fortress** - 3rd century BC
- **Samtavro necropolis** - used from the 3rd millennium BC to the 10th century AD
- **Armaziskhevi** - where a palace complex and globally significant bilingual inscriptions were uncovered.

The town's iconic monuments which represent outstanding examples of medieval Georgian religious architecture:

- **Svetitskhoveli Cathedral**
- **Jvari Monastery**
- **Samtavro Monastery**

*Getting there: Marshrutka (minibus) from Didube station • 1 GEL, 30 min. Or taxi from city center: ~25-30 GEL.*

## Georgian Gastronomy



Georgian gastronomy is one of the Caucasus region's most distinctive culinary traditions, shaped by centuries of cultural exchange between East and West. The cuisine varies by region from the walnut-heavy dishes of western Georgia to the herb-infused meat preparations of the east. At its heart are iconic dishes like khinkali (juicy dumplings filled with spiced meat or cheese), khachapuri (cheese-filled bread), badrijani nigvzit (fried aubergine rolls stuffed with walnut paste), and slow-cooked stews rich with aromatic herbs and spices like fenugreek, coriander, and the beloved blend khmeli suneli.

The Georgian table is also a deeply social institution. The tradition of the supra a grand feast presided over by a tamada (toastmaster) reflects the country's legendary hospitality.



Georgia is one of the world's oldest wine-producing nations, with over 8,000 years of wine-making history. The traditional qvevri method - fermenting wine in clay vessels buried underground - produces distinctive amber wines recognised by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. Kakheti remains the country's most celebrated wine region.

***Congress dinner on 26 September will be a full Georgian feast.***

## For The Field Trips

- **Wildlife awareness:** Georgia is home to various wildlife. Be careful of venomous snakes (especially in lowland and semi-arid regions such as David Gareji), scorpions in eastern areas, and ticks, which may carry Lyme disease. Do not walk in tall grass without proper closed footwear.

In many areas where field trips will be held, access to medical assistance may be limited. Please ensure you have adequate travel insurance before departure.

- **Protected caves and sites:** All caves designated as Cultural Heritage sites in Georgia are protected by national law. It is expressly prohibited to remove any type of sample without prior official authorisation.

Visitors are expected not to cause any damage to caves, property, or any person in their group. Please respect all site regulations.

- Georgian and English will be the main languages of this Congress and its field trips. Translation services will be provided.

## Before Booking Your Trip To Georgia

### Visa Requirements

Georgia has a very liberal visa policy: citizens of most countries (EU, USA, UK, Canada, Australia and many others) may enter visa-free for stays of up to 365 days. Citizens of other countries may apply for an e-Visa online. Apply at least four months before your trip.

#### Links

e-Visa portal [evisa.gov.ge](https://evisa.gov.ge)

Entry requirements [geoconsul.gov.ge/en/entering-georgia](https://geoconsul.gov.ge/en/entering-georgia)

Invitation letters Available on request: [hypogea2026@gmail.com](mailto:hypogea2026@gmail.com)

**⚠ Important:** Delegates are strongly advised to arrange personal travel insurance covering flights, accommodation and medical care. As of January 2026, all visitors entering Georgia must hold valid travel insurance with a minimum coverage of 30,000 GEL (approx. €10,000), including emergency evacuation. Insurance must be arranged before arrival. The Organising Committee does not provide insurance for participants.

- Please check with your doctor about immunisations you may need. Some caves contain bat guano, participants with respiratory sensitivities should consult their physician before entering bat-inhabited cavities
- **Alcohol.** The legal drinking age in Georgia is 18 years. Georgia has strict drink-driving laws with a zero-tolerance policy for drivers.
- **Electricity.** The standard voltage in Georgia is 220V / 50Hz. Sockets are the European two-pin round type (Type C/F). Visitors from the UK and USA should bring an appropriate adapter.
- **Weather in Tbilisi in September:** Average temperature 26°C, maximum 30°C, minimum 18°C. September is one of the driest months.

# Traveling to Tbilisi

## Three International Airports Serve Georgia

### Tbilisi International Airport (TBS) (primary)



**Distance** - 17 km east of the city centre — 30–40 min by taxi  
**Airlines** - Georgian Airways, Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, Air Arabia, Pegasus, LOT and more  
**Connections** - Istanbul, Frankfurt, Vienna, Paris, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Dubai, Tel Aviv and more  
**Airport → City** - Bus 337: 1 GEL, every 15 min (runs 24 hours) — Freedom Square / Samgori metro  
 Bolt / Maxim: 20–30 GEL

### Kutaisi International Airport (KUT) (low-cost hub)



**Distance** - ~230 km west of Tbilisi — 3.5 hrs by bus or private transfer  
**Airlines** - Wizz Air (main base), Pegasus, FlyArystan  
**Connections** - Rome, Warsaw, Athens, Berlin, Budapest, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Brussels, Lyon and 24 more  
**KUT → Tbilisi Georgian Bus:** departs after each arrival, ~4 hrs, ~25 GEL — [georgianbus.com](http://georgianbus.com)  
**Train:** 2 km shuttle bus to Kopitnari station, then ~3h–5h to Tbilisi, from 9 GEL  
**Private transfer:** ~3.5 hrs, from 212 GEL per car — pre-book recommended  
**More info** [kutaisi.aero](http://kutaisi.aero)

### Batumi International Airport (BUS) (Black Sea gateway)



**Distance** - ~375 km west of Tbilisi — 4.5–5 hrs by road or train  
**Airlines** - Turkish Airlines, Pegasus, Azerbaijan Airlines, Fly-Dubai, Geo Sky, and more  
**Connections** - Istanbul, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Baku, and seasonal European routes  
**BUS → Tbilisi Train:** Georgian Railway high-speed, ~5h 20 min, 36–76 GEL — [railway.ge](http://railway.ge)  
**Bus:** Metro Georgia / Citybus, departs Batumi central, ~5–6 hrs, 40 GEL  
**Private transfer:** ~4h 45 min drive, book via Bolt or local companies  
**More info** [batumiairport.com](http://batumiairport.com)

### Other Entry Routes

<b>Train</b>	Yerevan (Armenia) • Baku (Azerbaijan)
<b>International bus</b>	Yerevan, Istanbul, Minsk and more — Ortachala Bus Station, Tbilisi

# Getting Around Tbilisi

All public transport is operated by Tbilisi Transport Company (TTC) and costs a flat fare of 1 GEL per trip, including free transfers within 90 minutes.

TTC — Tbilisi Transport Company		TKT — Online Transport Tickets	
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://ttc.com.ge/en/front">ttc.com.ge/en/front</a>	<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://tkt.ge/en/transport">tkt.ge/en/transport</a>
<b>Info</b>	Real-time route planner, live bus tracker, MetroMoney card info, schedules and maps	<b>Info</b>	Buy MetroMoney top-up and transport passes online. Accepts international cards

MetroMoney Card — Your Key to Tbilisi Transport	
<b>Cost</b>	2 GEL deposit (refundable within 1 month). Card is not personal — can be shared.
<b>Where to buy</b>	Any metro station ticket office, Rike-Narikala cable car stations, Bank of Georgia branches
<b>Where to top up</b>	Metro stations, ExpressPay machines, Bank of Georgia self-service kiosks
<b>Online</b>	<a href="http://tkt.ge/en/transport">tkt.ge/en/transport</a> — top up before you arrive
<b>Payment alt.</b>	Contactless bank card or Apple/Google Pay: 1 GEL per trip (no 90-min transfer benefit)

Metro — Fastest Option	
<b>Lines</b>	2 lines: Akhmeteli-Varketili (red) • Saburtalo (green) • 23 stations
<b>Hours</b>	06:00–24:00 daily
<b>Nearest to venue</b>	Rustaveli station (red line) — 5 min walk to Georgian National Museum
<b>Key stops</b>	Rustaveli, Liberty Square, Avlabari (Old Town), Station Square (interchange)
<b>Fare</b>	1 GEL with MetroMoney. Free transfer to bus/cable car within 90 min.
<b>Map</b>	<a href="https://tbilisimetromap.webflow.io/">https://tbilisimetromap.webflow.io/</a>

Bus & Minibus Network	
<b>Hours</b>	07:00 – 23:00 daily
<b>Fare</b>	1 GEL with MetroMoney card (same 90-min transfer applies)
<b>Route planning</b>	<a href="http://ttc.com.ge">ttc.com.ge</a> or Google Maps (both show real-time positions)
<b>Airport bus</b>	Bus 337: Airport ↔ Freedom Square • runs 24 hours, every 15 min • 1 GEL
<b>Bus lanes</b>	City centre routes have dedicated bus lanes — usually faster than taxis
<b>City</b>	Bus 337 departs from in front of the Freedom Square metro station

Taxi & Ride-Hailing	
<b>Bolt</b>	Most popular app. Install before arrival. ~5–10 GEL across centre; airport: 20–30 GEL



<b>Maxim</b>	Good alternative to Bolt. Available city-wide.
<b>GG Georgia</b>	Local Georgian taxi app. <a href="http://ggtaxi.com">ggtaxi.com</a> / +995 32 220 0200
<b>Note</b>	Always use an app rather than hailing street taxis to ensure fair pricing

Cable Cars & Funicular	
<b>Rike-Narikala</b>	Rike Park ↔ Narikala Fortress. 2.50 GEL one-way. 10:00–24:00. Accepts MetroMoney.
<b>Mtatsminda Funicular</b>	Rustaveli ↔ Mtatsminda Park (restored 2024). 1 GEL one-way. Accepts MetroMoney.
<b>Bagebi-Maglivi</b>	University area. 08:00–20:00. 1 GEL one-way. MetroMoney.
<b>Tickets</b>	At the station or via the TTC mobile app

⚠ **Important:** Georgia’s official currency is the Georgian Lari (GEL). All purchases, services and payments within Georgia are made exclusively in Lari. Euros, US dollars and other foreign currencies are not accepted in shops, restaurants, hotels or for transport. You must exchange currency on arrival.

Currency Exchange	
<b>Rate (approx.)</b>	1 EUR ≈ 3.18 GEL • 1 USD ≈ 2.70 GEL • 1 GBP ≈ 3.65 GEL (rates vary - check before travel)
<b>Where to exchange</b>	Licensed exchange places (“savaluto”) in city centre. Rates are competitive; avoid hotel exchange desks.
<b>ATMs</b>	Widely available throughout Tbilisi. Accept Visa, Mastercard, Maestro. Recommended method.
<b>Card payments</b>	Major hotels, restaurants and shops accept cards.
<b>Airport exchange</b>	Available 24/7 at Tbilisi Airport. Rates slightly less favourable than city centre bureaux.
<b>Tip</b>	Withdraw Lari from an ATM on arrival for small expenses. Keep small denominations for small markets.

Calling tips for visitors	Detail
Roaming	Check with your home operator before travelling. Roaming can be expensive — a local SIM is often more practical for stays over a few days.
SIM cards	Available at the airport on arrival. Data packages are inexpensive. Prepaid SIMs from all three operators are widely available; passport required for registration.
WhatsApp / Viber	Widely used in Georgia for messaging and calls. Many local contacts prefer these over standard SMS.
Internet calls	Wi-Fi coverage is good across Tbilisi hotels, cafés and public spaces. VoIP (WhatsApp, Zoom, Teams) works reliably.
Mobile format	All Georgian mobile numbers start with 5 and are 9 digits long (after the country code). Drop the leading 0 when dialling internationally.

Emergency numbers	Service	Notes
112	Universal Emergency	Police, fire & ambulance — English operators available

112 is the primary emergency number and works from all phones including mobiles without a SIM card.

## Accommodation

Recommended Neighborhoods — Book Early	
<b>Old Town / Abanotubani</b>	10–15 min walk to congress venue. Charming guesthouses and boutique hotels.
<b>Rustaveli &amp; Mtatsminda</b>	Closest to the Georgian National Museum. Mix of grand and mid-range hotels.
<b>Vera &amp; Vake</b>	Upscale residential, 10–15 min by taxi. Quiet and green.
<b>Saburtalo</b>	Modern area, mid-range hotels, metro access.

Search all Tbilisi hotels and apartments: [tbilisi-hotels.com/en](https://tbilisi-hotels.com/en)  
 2,867 apartments • 881 hotels • 288 guesthouses • 113 hostels — all categories and price ranges

- COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT TBILISI**

Reservations:  
[marriott.com/tbscy](https://marriott.com/tbscy) | +995 32 277 91 00  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 50 m

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 325	GEL 380
Deluxe	GEL 415	GEL 465

- BROSSE GARDEN HOTEL**

Reservations:  
<https://brossegarden.ge> | +995551190325  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 700 m

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 200	GEL 221
Superior	GEL 237	GEL 307

- IBIS STYLES TBILISI CENTER**

Reservations:  
[h8413@accor.com](mailto:h8413@accor.com) | +995 32 200 24 24  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 200 m

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 215	GEL 250

- SHERATON GRAND METECHI PALACE**

Reservations:  
[marriott.com/tbssi](https://marriott.com/tbssi) | +995 32 277 20 20  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 1.5 km

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Classic	GEL 486	GEL 551
Standard	GEL 562	GEL 621

- TBILISI MARRIOTT HOTEL**

Reservations:  
[marriott.com/tbsmc](https://marriott.com/tbsmc) | +995 32 277 92 00  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 400 m

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 405	GEL 460
Deluxe	GEL 540	GEL 595

- HILTON GARDEN INN RIVERVIEW**

Reservations:  
[hilton.com/tbsrvgi](https://hilton.com/tbsrvgi) | +995 32 200 99 77  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 2.0 km

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 405	GEL 459
Superior	GEL 513	GEL 567

- RADISSON BLU IVERIA**

Reservations:  
[radissonhotels.com](https://radissonhotels.com) | +995 32 240 22 00  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 1.0 km

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 430	GEL 485
Superior	GEL 540	GEL 600

- HOLIDAY INN TBILISI**

Reservations:  
[ihg.com/holidayinn/tbilisi](https://ihg.com/holidayinn/tbilisi) | +995 32 230 00 99  
 Distance from Freedom Square: 3.5 km

ROOM CATEGORY	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Standard	GEL 270	GEL 324
Deluxe	GEL 351	GEL 405



