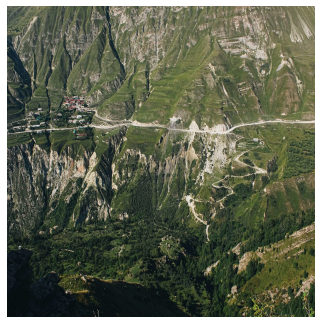
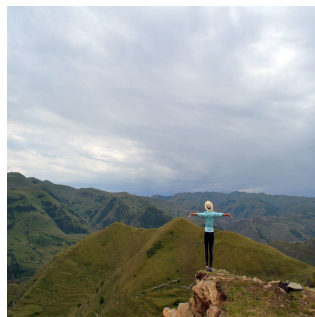


# The Heart of the Caucasus

Ethnotour to the Republic of Dagestan



The Caucasus without people is just beautiful scenery. The mountain natives create the very atmosphere of hospitality and cordiality that has become the main feature of the region. This authentic trip to Dagestan will be remembered not only for its picturesque locations but also for the warmth of communication with the locals.

# Experiences you'll have

## Weekend tour to Dagestan

In this journey, you can expect not a quick change of scenery, but a relaxed immersion in the culture and nature of Dagestan. You will get acquainted with the history of individual Caucasian families and the customs of different peoples of the republic – Avars, Kumyks, Laks, Lezgins, and enjoy the local cuisine. All this while surrounded by the incredible nature of the mountainous region.

This trip features comfort combined with maximum immersion in the region's ethnic charm. You will see how people live in different Dagestan settlements: the ancient Derbent city, the handicraft Kubachi village and the cultural center of the republic – Chokh aul.

During the 4 days of the tour you will:

- visit local people and get to know what genuine Caucasian hospitality means
- visit one of the main attractions of the region – the ghost Gamsutl aul on the mountain ridge, abandoned by its last inhabitant in 2015
- get acquainted with the local life in a museum house in Kubachi – you can try on national costumes and challenge yourself to dance the Lezginka
- learn how to cook traditional Avar botishal, a flatbread with cottage cheese and potato filling
- drink tea according to local traditions at the foot of the ancient fortress of Naryn-Kala in Derbent, a city with a thousand-year history.

**We accept bookings for groups of 6 or more**

Photos by Anastasia Tebenkova. Cover photo by [Marat Dalgatov](#).

## Itinerary

The journey begins in Makhachkala, where you should get to on your own before 1 p.m. on the first day of the program. Choose return tickets with departure from Makhachkala no earlier than 7 p.m. on the final day of the program.

We are ready to help with tickets purchasing. If necessary, leave a comment in the application.

### Day 1

**There will be a group transfer at 2 p.m. from Makhachkala**

airport to Derbent – the southernmost city of Russia, situated on the Caspian sea coast. On the way, you will be offered lunchboxes with fruit, pastries and a drink, and there will be a stop for coffee as well.

**You will arrive in Derbent around 4 p.m. and check in to**

your hotel. A local guide will then give you a tour of the city. Derbent is one of the oldest cities in Russia: it was first mentioned in the VI century BC.

**You will see the Naryn-Kala fortress – the main attraction**

of the city, included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. From the fortress walls, you will have a beautiful view of the old town and the Caspian sea coast. Under the walls of the citadel, there are ancient temples and mosques, medieval baths and the ruins of the Shah's palace.

**You will also see the Djuma Mosque, the oldest in Russia**

and the whole post-soviet area, and walk through the town's mahals – the small quarters of old Derbent, where the historical buildings are preserved.

Most popular

Caucasus

## The Heart of the Caucasus

Difficulty	
Age	from 18 y.o.
Group size	from 4 to 10
Duration	4 days

Accommodation at the trip



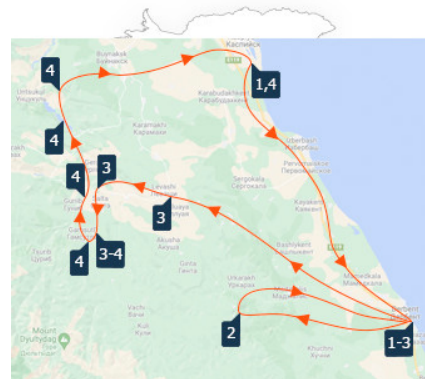
2 nights 1 nights

Языки



guide

from 702 EUR



### **In the evening you will have a traditional Caucasian tea**

ceremony in a cafe at the foot of Naryn-Kala fortress. You will be offered local sweets: dried fruits, halva, homemade pastry and jam. You can also order dinner here (extra charge).

### **In the evening you will return to the hotel and rest.**

## **Day 2**

### **After breakfast, you will take a minivan trip to Kubachi**

village (3 hours); on your way, you will stop for tea and coffee with local sweets.

### **After arriving in Kubachi, you will walk through a labyrinth**

of ancient streets and climb up the defensive tower, which offers magnificent views of the surrounding countryside. There is a museum in the tower, where you can take pictures wearing national costumes.

### **Then you will visit the locals and appreciate the scope of**

Caucasian hospitality: a real feast with homemade cheeses, different kinds of meat, fruits and vegetables will be organized for you.

### **In the fireplace room, where the dinner will take place, you**

will see many traditional household implements and ancient artifacts. You can explore the museum room and get acquainted with local culture. All those interested will be taught to dance the Lezginka, the national Caucasus dance.

### **After saying goodbye to the welcoming hosts you will go**

back to Derbent. In the evening there will be dinner in one of the restaurants in the city (extra charge), after which you will be taken back to the hotel where you will have a rest.

## **Day 3**

### **After breakfast, you will pack your things and check out of**

the hotel. At 9 a.m. you will be transferred to the Chokh aul (3 hours). On the way, you will stop at the Gergebil hydroelectric power station and visit the observation point in the Levashi village.

### **The Chokh aul is one of the most ancient settlements of**

the Northern Caucasus. Six highways of the Great Silk Road passed through it a long time ago, and now it is the most important cultural center of Dagestan, located in the picturesque Andalal valley and surrounded by mountains from all sides.

### **When you arrive in the aul, you will check into a guest**

house. Then go to the local people for lunch and listen to the hostess's stories about the culture and history of Dagestan. If you wish you can take part in a workshop on making Avar botishal (flatbread stuffed with cottage cheese and potatoes).

### **After lunch, you will take a guided walk tour around the**

ancient village and visit the local museum, where various antique items of everyday use are displayed. Then you will have free time. At 6 p.m. there will be dinner with national dishes in the guest house cafe.

#### Day 4

#### After breakfast, you will leave Chokh and go to one of

Dagestan's main sites - the abandoned Gamsutl aul.

#### Gamsutl is located on the crest of a mountain at an

altitude of 1500 meters above sea level, and it is only possible to get there on foot along a narrow path. Together with a guide you will walk through the abandoned village, whose last inhabitant left their home in 2015, and learn its history. The ghost village looks especially impressive from a height, but even without a drone, you will be able to take unusual pictures of the deserted houses in the steep cliffs.

#### If the weather permits, you will have a picnic lunch in

Gamsutl and, in case of rain, you will return to Chokh and have lunch in a cafe. Then you will be transferred to the Makhachkala airport. Looping along the picturesque serpentine, you will pass through the picturesque places of the republic: Gimry tunnel with the tower of the same name, Irganayskoe water reservoir and the Gunib Hydroelectric Power Station.

#### The approximate time of arrival at Makhachkala airport is 6

p.m.

## Accommodation at the trip

You will spend your first two nights in Derbent in the **Main Street or Alye Parusa hotels**. You will have comfortable double rooms at your disposal. Each has two single or one double bed, all necessary furniture, a TV set and a private bathroom.

The third night will take place in the Chokh aul. You will stay at the **Etnodom guest house**, two people per room. Each room will have its own bathroom with a shower. The guest house is decorated in ethnic style and has a terrace, which offers a beautiful view of the mountains.

## FAQ

### Who will be my guide

A local guide-driver Arip Khalidbegov - a certified tour guide will be with you throughout the tour.

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### Meals

The tour includes breakfasts and lunches in private homes and cafes on Days 2-4 and dinner on Day 3. Traditional tea ceremonies with local sweets are also included.

On the day of arrival, lunch boxes will be prepared for you for your lunch. You will need to pay extra for dinners on Days 1 and 2.

We can arrange vegetarian meals upon your request - please let us know at least two days in advance of the tour.

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### Can I take part



No special physical training is required to participate in this tour. There will be just one hike on the route - up to Gamsutl aul (40 minutes at a quiet pace one way). The rest of the time you will ride a comfortable minivan and make short walks.

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## What transport is used on the route

Transfers will be made in an air-conditioned 7-seat Toyota Alphard minivan (2015).

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## Mobile connection and Wi-Fi

The mobile connection will be available everywhere along the route except the transfers between the settlements, where it may be lost for 20-30 minutes. Internet connectivity will be available in Derbent, in the Kubachi village during lunchtime, and in the guest house in Chokh aul.

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## What will the weather be like

The beginning of May is a warm time in the plains of Dagestan. In the mountains, the weather is variable at any time of year. In Kubachi, Chokh, and Gamsutl you should be prepared for sunny, windy, rainy weather and temperature variations from +20 to +5 °C.

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## What to bring with me

- windproof and moisture-proof jacket with a hood
- comfortable windproof pants (e.g. hiking pants)
- warm sweatshirt (fleece or fleece-covered sweatshirt)
- t-shirts
- socks
- headband/headgear (optional)
- sneakers with non-skid soles or boots
- small backpack for the day
- sunglasses
- personal care items
- seat foam
- sunscreen (SPF 30)
- bottle or thermos for water (0.7 to 1 liter)
- personal first-aid kit\* (plasters, allergy remedies, remedies for stomach upsets, headaches, medicine to be taken on a regular basis)

\* the guide has a first aid kit with a basic set of medicines and first aid supplies.

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# Booking

Caucasus

## The Heart of the Caucasus

**Most popular**

Difficulty



Age

from 18 y.o.

Group size

from 4 to 10

Duration

4 days

Accommodation at the trip



2 nights



1 nights

**from 702 EUR**

**What's included in the price:**

- double accommodation in hotels and guesthouse
- breakfasts, lunches, one dinner
- all transfers as per program
- services of guides and drivers
- entrance tickets and tours as per program
- tea parties with local sweets

**Extra charge:**

- [air tickets](#) to Makhachkala (starting at 46 EURO for a round-trip)
- dinners on days 1 and 2



Best price  
guarantee



Personal  
tours



Discounts for  
regular clients



Gift  
cards