

Kaçkar – Trabzon to Erzurum – Group Guided

Summary

So what is so special about the North Eastern part of Turkey? Well only a few things really, firstly there are some the biggest mountains in the Western World. Mt. Kaçkar, our target, is 3,937m high (12,917ft). Its nearby neighbor, Mt. Ararat is even higher at 5,137m (16,854ft) and is widely believed to be the resting place of Noah's Ark. Our starting point Trabzon is close to the area where the human race first developed Blue Eyes. The mountain slopes are home to one of the world greatest tea producers. On our travels we will meet the Laz people a regional ethnic group who's Horon dance has spread across the Caucasian Region and as far as Greece and Russia.



Our Kaçkar trip is a summer exploration of some of the highest mountains in Turkey, whilst also discovering the Black Sea coast and its tea plantations, meeting the vibrant and cheerful Laz people and visiting the Ottoman cultural city of Erzurum. We steadily make our way to ever increasing altitudes to acclimatise to the altitude. We will eventually reach 4,000m. Our route to the ascent takes 3 days when we camp whilst our tents and essential items are carried by mules. Come and see the snow in Turkey in August!

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Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 - Flight to Trabzon

Transfer from the airport to our hotel in the lively historic center. We will have a chance to explore the city.

Day 2 - Sumela Monastery

In the morning we can explore the city of Trabzon where we can visit the Atatürk Museum and the Agia Sofia Church with its beautiful frescos. Atatürk is the much loved and revered founder of the modern Turkish Republic (1923). Afterwards, we drive about 50 kilometers to the Sumela Monastery, which clings on to a sheer rock wall. Frescos tell us stories of the testament in vibrant colour.

3. Day: Up into the Mountains

Today we start our journey into the mountains. The region and the mountain slopes are renowned for their Black Tea plantations. We will stop and visit one where we can learn about the production of the Turkish national drink. We stay overnight with a farmer's family who gives us insights in the traditional life of the Laz people. The Laz are a regional ethnic group that spread across NE Turkey and into other Caucasian countries such as Georgia, and Armenia.

4. Day: Journey to the Ayder– High Plateau

After a two hour drive, we arrive at the mountain village of Ayder, embedded in the lush green hills with distant high mountains setting a majestic scene. We will stay here for two nights.

In the evening, we will be shown the traditional Horon dance of the Laz people. Traditionally this is a dance for all and everybody is enthusiastically invited to join in. Horon is a dancing culture rather than a single dance and it has many variants. It is a tribute to the Laz people's passion for their own ethnic culture, that the Horon is now practised not only in NE Turkey but across the Caucasus and as far as Russia and Greece.

Learn [More About Horon](#) Some Professional Dancers [Dance 1](#) [Dance 2](#)

Day 5 - Hiking on the Pokut Plateau

This your first acclimatisation day. Our bus takes on narrow and twisting roads as we head further up into the mountains to the Pokut Plateau. Here, we make a steady start with a three hour hike in stunning high mountain scenery.

Day 6 - Free Day

Today, there is enough time to watch the daily life in the village or for a stroll. As a treat we can relax in the thermal baths. Short walks around the area are a delightful introduction to the lush green and dramatic scenery (1 or 2hrs).

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Day 7 - Start For Our Camp at Yukari Kavrun

After a one hour drive we arrive at Yukari Kavrun, where we put up our tents for one night. In the afternoon we hike for about 4 hours, with a light pack. We are now at a minimum height of around 2,500m. Our walk will help us get more comfortable with ascents and descents at this altitude. In the evening, we sit around our camp fire with a glass of wine and try to improve the world as we are inspired by our wild and breathtaking setting..

Day 8 - Hiking to the village of Olgunlar

Early in the morning, we load our heavy luggage onto our mules, who will carry it for the next 4 days. Today, we send them to Olgunlar, where we will spend the night in a neat mountain pension. On foot we set off, carrying just a day pack, across the mountains, passing wonderful mountain lakes and, if we are lucky, with views of the summit of Mount Kaçkar (about 6 hours).

Day 9 - Hiking to Dilberdüzü

Our mules set off ahead of us. With our light packs we hike on to the base camp for Mt. Kaçkar in Dilberdüzü, where we pitch up our tents for the next two nights (about 5 hours). After exchanging our experiences with other mountain hikers, we go to bed early. We need as much sleep as possible before a very early start the next day.

Day 10 - Conquest of the Magnificent Mt. Kaçkar

Hopefully our excitement will distract us from the chilling cold when we head off at 2 o'clock in the morning. Today is the day we ascend the highest peak at 3,937m. We only have until noon to make our return journey. After this time we risk having to face dangerously heavy rain and hail. After hiking about 4 hours uphill and 3 hours downhill, we can celebrate our achievement in style!

Day 11 - Descent to Olgunlar

After a brisk breakfast, we pack up our tents and take a relaxing hike back down to our hotel in Olgunlar. (4½ Hours)

Day 12 – Free Time to Recover

In Olgunlar we recover from the strain of the day before and relish the contemplative life in the village. An old Georgian church nearby is a gentle distraction and well worth the time to visit it.

Day 13 - Journey to Erzurum

Yusufeli is not only worth a visit because of its best Caga–Kebap in Turkey. Also the gigantic Georgian church is a most impressive site. then, after a short break at a romantic waterfall, we carry on to Erzurum, which is known as the cultural city of Anatolia.

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Day 14 - Erzurum

In Erzurum is in many ways a large open air museum. We can find wonderful examples of Seljuk remains and culture. Erzurum is also a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups. The Modern Day Republic of Turkey was formed by the unification (by Atatürk) of hundreds of tribal and ethnic groups. Many would say that this was his greatest achievement and is the reason for his universal popularity in Turkey. Here we can experience for ourselves the contrasts of this cultural mix.

15. Day: Journey home

Flight back from Erzurum airport

Summary and Metrics

We do not yet have detailed GPS data for the walks included in this itinerary.

The length of the hikes is from 10 km to 15 km and up to 700m difference in altitude.

The hiking takes place at an altitude between 2,000 and 4,000 meters.

The ascent to the Kaçkar peak goes up to 4,000 meters; this hike can be skipped if there are problems with walking at altitude.

The itinerary takes account of the difference in people's ability to cope with walking at altitude. Our approach is to gently acclimatise with gradual increases in altitude and level of challenge.

[At A Glance](#)

.SUMMARY	B&B	Home Stay	Camp	Airport Transfers	
Board Basis	10	1	3	OUT & IN	
Rating	Moderate to Challenging		No. of Walks	7	
Totals	31½	hrs	10-15 km	Altitude Change	2,000m

[Agent Price](#)

Based on two sharing a twin or double room. Group Size 8 - 15 Pax.

Season	01.07 – 30.08.2019
Per Person	£1,170
Single Supplement	£230